HORACE GREELEY
AND THE
TRIBUNE

RALPH RAY FAHRNEY

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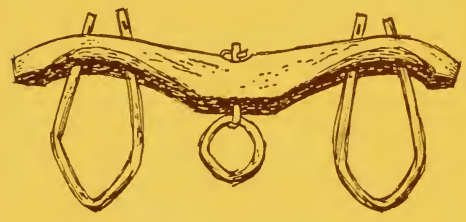

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Horace Greeley and the *Tribune* in the Civil War

HORACE GREELEY

and the

Tribune

in the Civil War

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TO
LEOTA

FOREWORD

Professor R. R. Fahrney has contributed useful information bearing on many points of our terrible Civil War which is now about to be understood by large numbers of people North, South and West. His theme is Horace Greeley and the famous *New York Tribune*, perhaps the most influential newspaper of its time.

It is very important these critical days of American history to have new and unpartisan accounts of the activities of that great and unfortunate struggle for democracy. Few men, after Lincoln himself, were more active or influential than the clever if troubled editor of the *Tribune*. What he hoped for, fought for and was disappointed in will always interest people who really wish to understand our past. I am, therefore, glad Mr. Fahrney is publishing his careful study and I hope many readers may follow his pages which I have read with great interest.

WILLIAM E. DODD

Chicago, July 20, 1936

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INTRODUCTION

In order to appreciate the full significance of any study involving Horace Greeley and the *New York Tribune* during the Civil War, it is necessary to understand from the outset, the strategic position they occupied in shaping the trend of events during an extremely critical period in the life of the nation.

All contemporaries, friends and foes alike, testify that the *Tribune* exerted the greatest influence upon public opinion of any journal in the country during the period under discussion. At the outbreak of the war, it boasted nearly three hundred thousand subscribers — a circulation considerably higher than that of any other paper — and it estimated that readers well in excess of a million habitually perused its columns.

Subscription figures only partially indicate the extent of *Tribune* influence in national affairs. A factor perhaps more important than number of readers concerns their distribution. Strangely enough, the Greeley organ was not primarily a New York paper. There were other dailies, better adapted to the commercial atmosphere of the city, that rivaled and even eclipsed its circulation within the metropolis. But through the Weekly and Semi-Weekly editions — condensed replicas of the Daily — the *Tribune* spoke to a vast rural aggregation distributed

throughout every state in the Union, preaching a doctrine and expounding a philosophy which its readers could readily understand and appreciate. Instead of being limited to preponderant influence within a particular locality, a widely distributed constituency scattered from Maine to California, furnished the basis of a power national in scope, and at times enabled the editor to mold public sentiment more effectively than even the President.

Furthermore, in so far as *Tribune* adherents were unevenly distributed throughout the north, they were concentrated in those states occupying the most strategic position in national affairs during the Civil War era. With the exception of New York, more people imbibed Greeley doctrine in Pennsylvania than in any other state of the Union, and the Keystone State was generally regarded as pivotal in connection with the more important political contests of the period. Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana ranked next on the *Tribune* roster, all more or less doubtful participants in the various controversies which arose in connection with the struggle for preservation of the Union.

Any discussion of the famous New York journal would be manifestly incomplete and inadequate without paying considerable attention to the eccentric editor, for in all essential respects, Horace Greeley was the *Tribune*. To be sure, by 1850 the paper possessed a formidable editorial staff, but the press had not yet passed completely out of that stage in

which the policy of a journal was closely identified in the public mind with the outstanding personality guiding its fortunes. Unquestionably, with a few exceptions, *Tribune* policy was Greeley policy regardless of who wrote the editorials, and for that matter, it would have been difficult to convince the great mass of rural subscribers from western New York to Iowa that the old white-coated philosopher did not pen every line in their political bible.

Herein lies the crux of *Tribune* power and influence. Horace Greeley was more than the editor of a great newspaper. He had acquired an enviable reputation as an expounder of political views, and had actively sponsored organization of the Republican party on a national scale. His persistent advocacy of free land and free labor identified him with the idealistic phase of the Republican movement, soon to be compromised by practical considerations, but adhered to tenaciously by a considerable element in the great Northwest. In short, the *Tribune* made Greeley, and Greeley made the *Tribune*, and the Civil War provided the setting in which they exerted a tremendous influence on the destinies of the nation.

It is the primary purpose of this study to acquire an estimate of Horace Greeley as a political force in the period under discussion, and to determine the effect of *Tribune* policy in molding public sentiment with regard to the crucial questions of the day. The first chapter traces the rise of the editor to a position of influence during several decades of political and

journalistic adventure preceding 1860, relating him to the principal characters and events of that era, and providing a background for a more intensive study of subsequent developments. *Tribune* policy is then traced through all the major activities and controversies which led to a conflict between sections and, during the war, so disrupted unanimity of purpose at the North as to render the Union perilously near permanent and complete disintegration.

Many have dipped into the *Tribune* here and there and have been invariably impressed with its vagaries and glaring inconsistencies. No doubt the criticism is partially justified and is not more than one could expect considering the strange quirks and impetuous perturbations of the editor's mind. And yet, thorough examination of the famous New York journal, carefully avoiding any breaks in various series of editorial pronouncements and relating them to contemporaneous events and influencing factors as well as to the inner workings of Greeley's mind as revealed by his private correspondence, discloses a fairly consistent policy cleverly bent and altered at intervals to meet unexpected developments and shiftings in public sentiment.

The fact that the *Tribune* not only assisted in molding public opinion but likewise reacted to that opinion, suggests that this study also serves to reveal successive alterations in northern sentiment during the war epoch. Joseph Chamberlain once asserted that the public press provided the most reliable

medium through which to gage the dictates of the popular will. It is a noteworthy fact that newspapers in a large measure print the material that their constituents are most anxious to digest, and people are inclined to read those journals which most nearly conform to the natural pattern of their thinking. While a certain earnestness and fearlessness on the part of Greeley often prevented him from playing the rôle of a model editor, for the most part he acceded to the outspoken demands of public opinion, and the *Tribune* to a large extent faithfully mirrors the alternating hope and despair that swept over a North distracted by the perplexities and disappointments of a disheartening struggle.

It has been considered advisable to devote some attention to newspapers other than the *Tribune*, in order to present a clearer view of various passing phases of public sentiment and properly orient Greeley and his paper among contemporary editors and journals that shared the confidence of the people. For that purpose, only a few of the more outstanding organs have been considered — principally those of New York — which represented different cross sections of public sentiment and were most closely related to the *Tribune* as friendly or unfriendly rivals in the field of war-time journalism.

Chapter I

SEWARD, WEED, AND GREELEY

The rise of a new party upon the shoulders of the slavery issue presented new opportunities in the field of American politics during the tempestuous years following the Kansas episode. It attracted the ambitious with axes to grind and political fortunes to reap, as well as enthusiastic idealists inspired by the visions and hopes of a new day. As convention time approached in 1860, these exponents of a new regime were exuberant. The first encounter with Democracy on a national scale had ended dismally, but now, with the enemy camp divided, prospects were bright for landing the Republican standard-bearer in the White House. Such a situation fostered intense political activity and excitement, culminating in the stirring nominating convention at Chicago.

Among various possibilities for the nomination, the stars seemed to point toward William H. Seward. He enjoyed an unrivaled reputation throughout the country as the exponent of the Republican creed with respect to slavery, and he had the backing of a political machine manned by the most skillful pilot in New York. On the other hand, there were certain factors which jeopardized his selection as

first choice of the Republican party, and in this category there stood out one important personality — the honest, impetuous, erratic Horace Greeley. How the eccentric editor of an American newspaper, somewhat deficient in political acumen and unsupported by influential political alliances, unhorsed the skillful Seward and left the cunning Thurlow Weed biting the dust, forms an interesting episode in the history of the political relations of three distinguished characters in national affairs.

By 1834, Horace Greeley had served the usual apprenticeship and was established in the printing business in New York City. Six years previous, Seward and Weed had formed a political alliance, and from then on they had waged an increasingly successful fight against a coterie of (Democratic) Republican politicians entrenched at Albany led by Martin Van Buren and known as the Regency. Even during the years of his apprenticeship, the political inclinations of Greeley had followed closely in the track marked out by the Anti-Regency leaders, and when the opponents of Democracy in New York City marshaled their forces for the local election of April, 1834, adopting the name "Whig," the young printer joined them.[1] The Whigs emerged from the campaign with fair success, but in state affairs, where Seward and Weed were the guiding spirits of the new party, they met overwhelming defeat despite the efforts of Greeley and the campaign paper of his

[1] Francis N. Zabriskie, *Life of Horace Greeley*, 188-190.

printing concern, the *Constitution*.[2] Discouraged and beaten, the New York Whigs generally, relapsed into a torpor of despair.[3]

As the disastrous results of Jacksonian finance became evident in the fall of 1837, however, rapidly ebbing Whig hopes were revived. Greeley entered actively into the local canvass of that year, but the major portion of his attention was devoted to the responsibilities and embarrassments of a journalistic venture, the *New Yorker*, dedicated primarily to the promulgation of social and economic reform.[4] When the November campaign disclosed the extent of Whig triumph, the paper threatened to go upon the rocks. With fifty-five hundred subscribers, and eight thousand dollars owing to it, the nerve-wracked editor was ready to transfer the whole concern as a gift to anyone who would discharge debts amounting to four thousand dollars.[5]

At this juncture there walked into the rude editorial attic of Greeley none other than the astute Weed. He introduced himself to the surprised journalist, whom he had known previously only through the columns of the ill-fated *New Yorker*, and an amiable conversation concerning things political ensued.[6] When Weed returned to Albany the next day,

[2] *Bibliography of Horace Greeley, etc., by Nathan Greeley*, 11, Miscellaneous Greeley MS Collection.

[3] Horace Greeley, *Recollections of a Busy Life*, 112.

[4] *Ibid.*, 124.

[5] Letter to two friends, S. Mears and B. F. Ransom, January 14, 1838, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

[6] Weed explained later that he was attracted to Greeley largely

it was understood that during the 1838 contest and for the consideration of one thousand dollars, Greeley would edit a campaign paper at Albany entitled *The Jeffersonian*, under the auspices of the Whig Central Committee.[7]

The Jeffersonian proved immensely effective, and its articles were extensively copied by Whig journals throughout the state.[8] Seward turned the tables on William L. Marcy, his opponent in 1834, and rode into Albany on a comfortable ten thousand majority. Greeley suddenly emerged as a New York politician of some repute, and Weed, behind the scenes, confidently gathered the reins together in his hands.

While only a temporary enterprise, *The Jeffersonian* proved to be the medium through which its editor entered as the junior partner into the revamped political firm of Seward, Weed, and Greeley. The new accession had justified the expectations of his more experienced colleagues, and, as he contributed now and then an editorial to the *Albany Evening Journal* — the official journal of the Weed organization — besides conducting the *New Yorker* and *The Jeffersonian* in a most commendable fashion, it became increasingly apparent that his editorial ability would prove a valuable adjunct in

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because a close perusal of the *New Yorker* marked out its editor as a strong tariff advocate, and in all probability "an equally strong Whig." Thurlow Weed, *Autobiography* (Harriet A. Weed, ed.), I, 466.

[7] James Parton, *The Life of Horace Greeley*, 140.

[8] Greeley, 127.

future contests.[9] The new political combination lasted throughout the entire lifetime of the Whig party, operating efficiently and effectively to the satisfaction of its friends and the despair of its enemies. For, with Greeley shaping public opinion, Seward garnering votes, and Weed faithfully tending the political machinery, gratifying results were inevitable.

Although Henry Clay of Kentucky commanded a plurality of votes when the Whig convention met at Harrisburg to choose a candidate for the campaign of 1840, Seward and Weed questioned his ability to carry the election and they threw their support to General Harrison of Ohio as the most available candidate.[10] Greeley, less concerned with expediency and strongly attached to one whom he not only admired and trusted but "profoundly loved," [11] wavered momentarily, but finally he succumbed to the convincing arguments of Weed,[12] combining his efforts with those of the Albany boss to end the long struggle on the floor of the convention in favor of the hero of Tippecanoe.[13]

Again, at the suggestion of Seward, Weed, and other prominent New York Whigs, Greeley edited a campaign paper entitled the *Log Cabin*, similar in

[9] L. D. Ingersoll, *The Life of Horace Greeley*, 90, 91.
[10] Greeley, 130.
[11] *Ibid.*, 166.
[12] Thurlow Weed, "Recollections of Horace Greeley," *The Galaxy*, XV, 373.
[13] Greeley, 131; Ingersoll, 92.

design to *The Jeffersonian*, but appealing outside the bounds of New York to every part of the country.[14] When the hilarious enthusiasm of an unprecedented campaign subsided in favor of the peaceful demeanor of more tranquil days, General Harrison had been given over to a swarm of hungry office seekers, Seward had ridden back into office on the crest of Whig success, and Horace Greeley found himself for the first time financially solvent and one of the best known editors in the country.[15]

Encouraged by success in the field of political journalism, Greeley resolved upon the establishment of the *New York Tribune*, a paper which would avoid either eulogizing or condemning solely on the basis of party loyalty and endeavor to remove itself "alike from servile partisanship on the one hand, and from gagged, mincing neutrality on the other." [16] The first issue appeared a few days after the death of President Harrison.[17] When Greeley gave Tyler up as a rogue late in 1841 [18] and turned his attention to the next presidential campaign, the *Tribune* was already a highly influential journal with a circulation credited to the *Daily* of fifteen thousand, and with

[14] Ingersoll, 94.

[15] *Ibid.*, 100.

[16] Greeley, 137; Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States*, 523.

[17] The *New Yorker* and the *Log Cabin* were published alongside the *Daily Tribune* until the fall of 1841, at which time the *Weekly Tribune* took their place. William A. Linn, *Horace Greeley*, 59; Ingersoll, 124, 125.

[18] Parton, 164.

the *Weekly* running much higher. Consequently, it was able to speak effectively in behalf of Henry Clay for the Whig nomination once Greeley had concluded from first-hand observation in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania that party success in 1844 depended upon forcing the tariff issue to the foreground.[19] Seward and Weed concurred in the Clay movement, which stampeded the Whig convention and honored the famous Kentuckian with an almost unanimous endorsement.[20]

Greeley entered into the canvass of 1844 with a zest which outrivaled his efforts in behalf of Harrison. Besides the regular editions of the *Tribune, The Clay Tribune* — a campaign paper modeled after the *Log Cabin* — gained a wide circulation.[21] The editor had always exercised moderation in opposing slavery, and in order to steer Clay clear of the ugly Texas question, he at first "deprecated, for reasons of policy, any Northern co-mingling of the questions of annexation and slavery" in the campaign.[22] But the burning question of slavery would not remain in abeyance, and Greeley soon joined the Seward-Weed faction in resisting the further extension of the slave domain. Unwilling to assume such an advanced position, Clay endeavored unsuccessfully to straddle the

[19] Linn, 114.

[20] According to Weed, he and Greeley were in constant communication and "concurred heartily in the mode and manner of conducting the campaign." Weed, *Autobiography*, I, 467, 468.

[21] Ingersoll, 162.

[22] Linn, 145, 146.

issue, and the Democrats were returned to power.[23]

With the annexation of Texas, the *Tribune* left no room to doubt that henceforth it would assail slavery and the slave power with the utmost vigor and determination. It denounced the Mexican War as "unjust and rapacious," and insisted that so sure as the universe had a ruler, every acre of territory acquired thereby would prove to the nation "a curse and the source of infinite calamities." [24]

Despite the "paltering" attitude of Clay with reference to Texas, Greeley turned once more to the ambitious Kentuckian in 1848, anxious to "try over again" the tariff issue. Surely, under ordinary circumstances, no state, not even Pennsylvania, could "again be persuaded that any Democrat was as good a Protectionist as Henry Clay." [25] But Seward and Weed were of another mind. This time their choice fell upon General Zachary Taylor, and the resourceful Weed proceeded to maneuver the Mexican hero into a position where he might be accepted by the Whig convention.

For the first time, the firm of Seward, Weed, and Greeley, which had functioned for ten years without a hitch, was threatened with partial dissolution. Greeley rejected Taylor on account of the very qualifications which rendered him available and recommended him so highly to Seward and Weed as one who might be properly fashioned once in the

[23] Greeley, 165.
[24] Ingersoll, 192.
[25] Greeley, 211.

White House. In short, the General had never voted; "his capacity for civil administration was wholly undemonstrated"; he had been but slightly identified with the Whig party; and nobody knew his views with respect to the issues before the country.[26] When the Philadelphia convention nominated him, Greeley rushed from the hall in disgust. The *Tribune* "would take time for reflection." [27] Its editor sulked for three months, and finally capitulated reluctantly only six weeks before election day, agreeing to support the Whig nominee as the only means of avoiding another Democratic administration.[28]

The same election returns which landed General Taylor in the White House, dispatched Horace Greeley, half-reluctantly, to the United States House of Representatives to serve out "the fag-end" of a term left vacant by the unseating of David S. Jackson, Democrat, on the ground of fraud. The Speaker of the House assigned the irrepressible journalist to the Committee on Public Lands where he and his colleagues put their heel on some "barefaced robberies" originating in the Senate, but were completely duped by others, virtually giving away a considerable quantity of the public domain unsuspectingly accepted as swamp lands, some of which, it later became apparent did not have "standing water enough on a square mile of their surface to float a duck in March."[29] On the floor of the House, Gree-

[26] *Ibid.*, 211.
[27] Linn, 149.
[28] Parton, 252.
[29] Greeley, 230, 231.

ley's persistent efforts for mileage reform elicited feeble response. Seward concluded that he was "trying to reform Congress all at once," and he confided to Weed that their obstreperous prótége was "doing himself most ungracious service." [30] Doubtless his up-state associates felt relieved when the over-zealous editor returned to the *Tribune* office.

As the struggle over slavery in the Mexican Cession waxed warm, the *Tribune* would listen to no proposals for compromise in the matter of extending slavery to the territories.[31] It preferred to see "the Union a thousand times shivered," rather than consent to assist those who would "plant Slavery on Free Soil." [32] Thus far, the North had "lost by compromises and gained by struggles"; now was the time to struggle.[33] Seward doubtless experienced a thrill of inward exultation as he perceived the powerful journal, accepted by tens of thousands of farmers throughout the Adirondacks and the Northwest as their political bible, preaching a doctrine which harmonized so perfectly with his efforts to undo Clay and his compromise through the instrumentality of the pliable occupant of the White House.

But the *Tribune* failed to adhere consistently to the course marked out in the early months of 1850. By June, it would accept the Clay proposals as the

[30] Letter of Seward to Weed, December 7, 1848, *Seward at Washington, 1846-1861* (F. W. Seward, ed.), 92.

[31] *Weekly Tribune*, January 26, 1850.

[32] *Ibid.*, February 23, 1850.

[33] *Ibid.*, February 9, 1850.

only means of satisfying Texas and relinquishing New Mexico from its grip.[34] Back to the original position a month later, it contemplated the time when "the whole fabric of the Compromise at once vanishes into thin air not again to be heard from." [35] It was indeed a difficult and bewildering problem to conserve the largest possible area to freedom without paying the price of distasteful and humiliating concessions to the slave power.[36]

Another presidential campaign found Weed in Europe, and upon Seward fell the chief responsibility of pre-convention days. The latter, relying upon the efficacy of former tactics, turned again to a military hero. General Winfield Scott was available, and would doubtless submit to manipulation.[37] The *Tribune* favored Scott as against Fillmore, refused to accept the finality of the Compromise, and heartily supported the unsuccessful effort, in which Seward concurred, to prevent Whig endorsement of the obnoxious settlement.[38] During the subsequent campaign, the *Tribune* supported the Whig candidates but spat upon the platform, invoking repeated anathemas upon the fugitive slave law and refusing "to keep silence about slavery" for "any five thousand Whig votes." [39]

The defeat of Scott sounded the death-knell of

[34] *Ibid.*, June 22, 1850.
[35] *Ibid.*, July 13, 1850.
[36] See Greeley, 256.
[37] Frederic Bancroft, *The Life of William H. Seward*, I, 300 ff.
[38] *Daily Tribune*, May 21, June 4, 12, 22, 1852.
[39] Linn, 163.

the party. The attitude of the *Tribune* and many northern free soilers in failing to subscribe to the Baltimore platform offended southern co-laborers. Robert Toombs wrote to Crittenden of Kentucky: "We can never have peace and security with Seward, Greeley and Co. in the ascendant in our national counsels, and we had better purchase them by the destruction of the Whig party than of the Union." [40] The *Tribune* accepted the decree of Toombs complacently, spoke of "the late Whig party," and announced an independence of all party organizations in the future while adhering faithfully to the political tenets for which it had formerly battled under the Whig banner.[41]

When Douglas and his Kansas-Nebraska bill reopened the issue concerning slavery in the territories, the *Tribune* entered vigorously into the fray.[42] It cursed Douglas as an untrustworthy, contemptible bidder for the Presidency, and received subscriptions for Kansas relief. The twenty-two thousand dollars which poured into the *Tribune* coffers, mostly composed of one-dollar offerings, was converted into "Beecher Bibles" and arrived in Kansas via shoeboxes, to be used effectively in the hands of freedom's front line defenders in avenging the ashes of

[40] *Correspondence of Robert Toombs, Alexander H. Stephens, and Howell Cobb* (Ulrich B. Phillips, ed.), A. H. A. Report, 1911, II, 322.

[41] Parton, 343.

[42] *Daily Tribune*, July 18, 1854; Henry Wilson, *History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*, II, 407, 408.

Lawrence and the blood of fallen martyrs to the cause.[43]

Meanwhile, there were ominous signs of dissatisfaction in the political firm of Seward, Weed, and Greeley. No doubt the senior partners partially distrusted one who had manifested an increasingly recalcitrant attitude ever since the disagreement over Taylor in 1848. Also, there was a feeling on the part of Greeley that someone else was displacing him in the high estimation of his up-state allies. Early in 1853, he complained that another paper had been able to copy Seward speeches ahead of the *Tribune*. The protest drew a rebuke from the New York Senator, to which Greeley complained: "I don't want to outline your Speeches before you make them . . . (but) Simonson's telegraphic outline is copied in the *Albany Journal* and other papers ahead of your speech, giving the impression that *The Times* is your special organ and its filibustering editorials and general negation of principle especially agreeable to you." [44]

Greeley saw the drift. The *New York Times* was the audacious offender, and its editor was none other than the young, aspiring Henry J. Raymond, a former assistant on the *Tribune* editorial staff who had severed the none too genial relation with his chief

[43] Don C. Seitz, *Life of Horace Greeley*, 149; W. H. Isely, "The Sharps Rifle Episode in Kansas History," *American Historical Review*, XII, 560, 561.

[44] Letter to Seward, February 6, 1853, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

in 1843.[45] With the founding of the *Times* in 1851, Raymond commenced editing a journal decidedly political in scope and in some respects better adapted to the requirements of Seward and Weed than the *Tribune*.[46]

Added to the mortification of being supplanted by a younger rival, Greeley nursed the grievance that he had not been accorded all the recognition his services merited. He had hinted to Weed on different occasions that he might be useful in some official position.[47] And in the summer of 1854, after having received frequent mention as a possibility in the gubernatorial race,[48] he approached the Albany boss with the suggestion that the time and circumstances were favorable to his nomination. Weed conceded that his aspiring ally could be elected if put forth as a candidate, but professed to have lost control of the state nominating convention. The temperance issue would enter strongly into the campaign, the New York journalist was apprised, and, while the *Tribune* had educated the people to the point of accepting a prohibition candidate, another aspirant, Myron H. Clark, had stolen the editor's thunder. With the backing of numerous Know Nothing lodges secretly organized throughout the state, Clark would secure the nomination.

[45] Augustus Maverick, *Henry J. Raymond and the New York Press*, 35.

[46] Bancroft, I, 367, 368.

[47] *Memoir of Thurlow Weed* (Thurlow Weed Barnes, ed.), II, 286; Linn, 171, 172.

[48] Parton, 353.

According to Weed, Greeley cheerfully surrendered and repaired to his editorial den, but in a few days returned and abruptly inquired if there was any objection to his running as Lieutenant-Governor. Not fully appreciating the disgruntled state of his mind, Weed discouraged the proposal, apparently satisfying him of the inadvisability of prohibition "at both ends of the ticket." [49] When the state convention ended its deliberations, however, to the surprise and chagrin of Greeley the name of Henry J. Raymond appeared on the ticket as Clark's running mate. Convinced that Weed had double crossed him, the editor of the *Tribune* was in an ugly mood.[50]

Meanwhile, the Republican movement, originating in the Northwest and gathering into its folds the opponents of Douglas and the Kansas outrage, swept eastward. Alvan E. Bovay, the guiding spirit at Ripon, Wisconsin, after considerable nagging, at last persuaded his friend Greeley, to display the Republican flag in the *Tribune* columns.[51] Two months later the latter actively participated in an Anti-Nebraska convention at Saratoga, serving on the Business Committee, which reported resolutions heartily approving the western movement and expressing a determination to abandon every party which failed to oppose the extension of slavery in the territories.[52]

[49] *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, II, 225, 226.
[50] *Ibid.*, II, 227.
[51] On June 24, 1854; Seitz, 157.
[52] *Daily Tribune*, August 17, 18, 1854.

Without taking action on the resolutions, the convention adjourned to meet at Auburn September 26, where an attempt to found a new party proved abortive, since the regular Whig convention had nominated a ticket in decided opposition to the Nebraska policy and adopted a platform in substantial agreement with Anti-Nebraska views.[53] The delegates at Auburn adopted the Whig ticket, and Republicanism in New York had to await a more convenient season.

Had Greeley succeeded in his designs at Saratoga and Auburn, the Whig party would have been disrupted, and a new alignment would have offered the possibility of securing less obnoxious candidates. As it was, the *Tribune* felt compelled to render grudging support to the nominees, now and then interjecting a poorly disguised thrust at Raymond by suggesting that perhaps his record on prohibition was not quite as disreputable as former *Times* editorials indicated.[54] Apologizing thus to the prohibition element for a candidate with an admittedly shaky past, and lamenting the failure to unite with anti-slavery Democrats, the independently inclined journal cast party loyalty aside and called upon all true lovers of freedom to embrace the movement which it earnestly trusted would soon triumphantly sweep the entire North under the Republican banner.[55]

[53] Wilson, II, 413, 414.
[54] *Daily Tribune*, September 21, 27, 1854.
[55] *Ibid.*, October 3, 1854.

But the editorial column of the *Tribune* did not reveal the storm that had been brewing for months in the mind of Greeley. As the campaign drew to a close, he informed Seward that he had held in as long as possible and after the election they must talk over the situation. If Seward had "any plans for the future," he wanted to know them, and if not, it was time to form some of his own.[56] Shortly after the election, the New York Senator was greeted with a long letter from his disgruntled associate filled with bitter complaints at having failed to receive justly earned recognition from the hands of ungrateful partners, and formally dissolving the firm of Seward, Weed, and Greeley.[57]

The recipient of the letter informed Weed in a general way of "a long letter . . . full of sharp, pricking thorns," otherwise failing to reveal its full significance, and he enquired concerning a vacancy in the Board of Regents.[58] No doubt Seward offered the long deferred recognition, but by now poor Greeley had sunk to the depths of despair. He replied: "My political life is ended. Do not regard

[56] Letter to Seward, October 25, 1854, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

[57] The entire letter dissolving the partnership, dated November 11, 1854, may be found in Greeley, 315 ff.

[58] *Seward at Washington, 1846-1861*, 239. Weed professed to have known nothing of Greeley's letter to Seward until after the Chicago convention of 1860, but, in view of the intimate relation which existed between Seward and Weed, it is hardly possible that the latter had not been informed of the main purport of the missive which threatened to affect in no small measure the future political activity of all concerned. See *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, II, 272.

me as dissatisfied with what has been. There was a time when it would have been precious to me to have had some public recognition. . ." Now, he would sell out his interest in the *Tribune* and "glide out of the arena as quietly and as speedily as may be," trusting the party would be benefited thereby. Bitterly he averred that "with Myron H. Clark, the bogus Know-Nothing for Governor and H. J. Raymond for Lieut," the *Times* would be "the proper state organ" in New York City. As for himself, he only wanted public recognition that he had been "esteemed a faithful and useful coadjutor." [59]

But Greeley did not sell the *Tribune*, and he did not "glide out of the arena." Instead, the winter of 1855-56 found him busily engaged at Washington keeping an eye on "those who hate the *Tribune* much, (but) fear it yet more," while the battle raged over the Speakership.[60] He constantly advised with members of the House, while the *Tribune*, under the immediate supervision of Charles A. Dana, the managing editor, thundered as never before. Greeley stuck to Nathaniel Banks through thick and thin, hoping that his election would pave the way for a successful national organization of the Republican party and the rapid extinction of Know-Nothingism.[61]

Meanwhile, New York politics had experienced a

[59] Letter to Seward, November 24, 1854, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

[60] Letter from Greeley to Charles A. Dana, December 1, 1855, Greeley MSS.

[61] Ingersoll, 300, 301.

partial metamorphosis. The *Times* was now voicing the aspirations of the new firm of Seward, Weed, and Raymond. In the fall of 1855, the Whigs of New York fused with the Republicans and looked forward expectantly to the first national nominating convention of a new party. Seward, Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, and Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, loomed as the most promising presidential timber.

Greeley was as pessimistic as Weed about electing any candidate with decided Republican propensities. In January, 1856, he confided to his friend Beman Brockway that he did not believe there were "republican votes today wherewith to elect anybody." [62] By the end of April, the *Tribune* had not yet named a first choice for the nomination, but it insisted upon one "around whom Whigs, Democrats, Abolitionists . . . may rally without embarrassment or mutual repugnance." [63] On the eve of the convention, it drew a question mark after the names of Seward, Chase, and Sumner, citing Colonel Fremont as its ruling favorite.

Conforming to *Tribune* policy, the convention passed over all the greater lights of Republican fame and rendered a verdict for Fremont, whose previous exploits engendered few antagonisms and inspired tremendous enthusiasm in the new crusade for freedom. Greeley was pleased and felt no inclination now to "glide out of the arena." [64]

[62] Letter to Beman Brockway, January 8, 1856, Greeley MSS.
[63] *Daily Tribune*, April 29, 1856.
[64] For Greeley's activities at the convention, see George W.

The year 1858 opened upon a confused political situation portending important party re-alignments. By repudiating the Lecompton Constitution, Douglas had not only driven a wedge into the ranks of his own party, but he had provided the basis for dissension between western and eastern opponents. In Illinois, Republican leaders immediately directed their energy towards widening the breach in the local Democracy by encouraging a faction of Administration Lecomptonites,[65] and ere long they were marshaling their forces behind Abraham Lincoln in hopeful anticipation of success in a Senatorial tussle with the "Little Giant." In the East, such outstanding Republican leaders as Seward, Henry Wilson, Anson Burlingame, and Nathaniel Banks were inclined to forget the past and accept Douglas as their own.[66] The "Little Giant" gave out the impression that he could no longer operate with his party, and having "taken a through ticket, and checked his baggage," was in the fight to stay.[67] Disgruntled Lecomptonites scowled and muttered foul execrations as Seward and Douglas bowed to each other in the Senate Chamber, seated themselves complacently,

Julian, "The First Republican National Convention," *American Historical Review*, IV, 316.

[65] W. H. Herndon to Lyman Trumbull, February 19, 1858, Lyman Trumbull Papers.

[66] John T. Morse, Jr., *Abraham Lincoln*, I, 116, 117. Henry Wilson was certain that Douglas was with the Republicans as shown by a letter to Theodore Parker, February 28, 1858. See J. F. Newton, *Lincoln and Herndon*, 148.

[67] Newton, 147.

and conversed amiably concerning the architectural beauties of the new hall.[68]

Greeley likewise turned to the exponent of popular sovereignty in a spirit of engaging friendliness. Now and then he paid a visit to the Douglas residence in Minnesota block, and an inside rumor had it that the *Tribune* favored the Illinois Senator for the Presidency.[69] In fact, one report generally accepted at Lincoln headquarters during the latter part of the Illinois Senatorial contest, had it that Greeley, Seward, and Weed met Douglas in Chicago during October, 1857, and agreed upon plans for 1860.[70]

The Illinois Republicans observed the trend of events with alarm as the contagion of amalgamation spread to the Northwest and threatened to undo their champion, the Illinois rail splitter.[71] W. H. Herndon, Lincoln's law partner, hurried east to confer with Greeley, and to look Douglas "in the eye." But the trip accomplished little, for the *Tribune* lauded Douglas throughout the early part of the Senatorial campaign, and in general, threw cold

[68] H. B. Stanton, *Random Recollections*, 64.

[69] Newton, 147.

[70] According to the agreement as related by W. H. Herndon to Theodore Parker in a letter of September 20, 1858, Douglas was to have the support of Seward, Weed, and Greeley in the Senatorial campaign, in return for which the Illinoisan would support Seward for the Presidency in 1860, and forego his own presidential aspirations until a later date. See Newton, 217.

[71] Amos Babcock to Trumbull, May 26, 1858, Lyman Trumbull Papers; James S. Pike, *First Blows of the Civil War*, 403; see also letter of Lincoln to Henry Wilson, June 1, 1858, J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, II, 140, 141.

water on the Republican cause.[72] The *Chicago Tribune* launched a counter attack upon the schismatic eastern journal,[73] and the *Chicago Daily Journal*, thoroughly aroused, warned "No Interference!" It wanted "no dictation from any source whatever," and furthermore, "would not suffer it"; the Illinois Republicans would tend to their own business in their own way. To this, the *Tribune* replied lamely, that of course the western brethren had a "right to designate their own candidates," but the Republicans of other states reserved the equal right to express approbation of one "who separates himself from a triumphant majority to fight on the side of a minority." [74]

Such an attitude on the part of the *Tribune* and other eastern Republican journals with large circulations in the Northwest, compelled the Lincolnites to struggle through a desperate uphill fight. In midsummer, Lyman Trumbull was urged to return to Illinois at once by way of the Empire State, where, if possible, he was to straighten out the New York papers.[75] Greeley finally promised "to do all I reasonably can to elect Lincoln," from which Herndon concluded "that Horace is with us and soon will be *heart* and *hand*," [76] but the *Tribune* continued to dis-

[72] Newton, 151, 152, 240; see also *Weekly Tribune*, July 3, 1858.

[73] See letter, Greeley to Joseph Medill, July 24, 1858, Nicolay and Hay, II, 140, 141.

[74] *Weekly Tribune*, May 15, 1858.

[75] N. B. Judd to Trumbull, Lyman Trumbull Papers, July 11, 1858.

[76] W. H. Herndon to Trumbull, July 22, 1858, Lyman Trumbull Papers.

course in much the same compromising tone until election day. By September, the Lincoln managers viewed the prospects despairingly, attributing their "downward slide" to Greeley's "cowardly editorials," [77] and election day justified their pessimism. In the words of Herndon, "so wags this great political world."

As the convention of 1860 approached, Seward enjoyed an enviable reputation in Republican circles, and with the backing of the powerful Weed machine in New York, his chances for the nomination appeared excellent. Nevertheless, he had to reckon with the aspirations of Simon Cameron, the popularity of Chase, the conservative appeal of Edward Bates, the availability of Judge McLean of Ohio, and the rising tide of public approval throughout the Northwest in favor of Abraham Lincoln.

Doubtless Seward had reason to expect that his vast popularity would carry him safely past all opponents on the first ballot. But the "higher law" doctrine and other radical utterances, which had contributed greatly to his prominence, were unacceptable to a large conservative element within the party. And doubtful states such as Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, and Illinois, in which victory at the polls depended upon the fusion of more or less discordant elements in support of a candidate qualifying on the basis of availability, hesitated to accept

[77] W. H. Herndon to Theodore Parker, September 25, 1858, Newton, 219.

one who represented the most advanced position of anti-slavery Republicanism.[78]

Furthermore, Seward's connection with Weed had its weaknesses as well as its advantages, identifying him as it did with an offensive lobby combination in New York.[79] H. B. Stanton, a Seward delegate, admitted that New York Republicanism had been made "a reproach, a byword, by the rascally conduct of our state legislature, under the lead of Weed," and even Chase confessed: "if Albany is to be transferred to Washington, the party cannot succeed." [80]

And then there was Greeley. From the very inception of the Republican party, he had been convinced that success in a national contest depended in no small measure upon a candidate orthodox on the slavery issue, but otherwise of conservative antecedents and tendencies. In the spring of 1856, he declared: "The Republican movement is defensive, not aggressive, conservative of Freedom, rather than destructive of Slavery. . . This country ought to be and yet will be cleared of Slavery, but the first practicable step is to stop the progress and extension of the evil. In this step all true conservatives . . . ought to unite." He appealed for a platform "so broad and liberal that all who stand for Public Faith may come to the aid of those whose animating purpose

[78] See A. K. McClure, *Our Presidents and How We Make Them*, 156, 157; also A. K. McClure, *Abraham Lincoln and Men of War Times*, Fourth edition, 33; Ida M. Tarbell, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, II, 141.

[79] Gideon Welles, *Lincoln and Seward*, 27.

[80] Albert B. Hart, *Salmon Portland Chase*, 184, 185.

is the extension of Freedom." "And let us," he cautioned, "by proving our capacity to win *one* victory, open the way for winning many more." [81]

In April, 1859, Greeley still lacked faith that the anti-slavery men of the country had "either the numbers or the sagacity required to make a President." If Seward or Chase should be nominated on the platform of 1856, he would "go to work for him with a will," but with perfect certainty of being "horribly beaten." [82] About the same time, he confided to a friend: "An Anti-Slavery man *per se* cannot be elected; but a tariff, River and Harbor, Pacific Railroad, Free Homestead man may succeed. . . I wish the country were more anti-slavery than it is; *as* it is, I hope to have as good a candidate as the majority will elect." [83]

And finally, there was the letter "full of sharp and pricking thorns" dissolving the firm of Seward, Weed, and Greeley. Strangely enough the caustic missive had for six long years quietly reposed in the possession of its recipient. Had Seward and Weed forgotten it? Such a version fails to do justice to their political acumen and foresight. There is every reason to believe that they had purposely resolved to keep the whole matter in the dark. Neither Se-

[81] Letter to William M. Chase, Samuel W. Peckham and Wingate Hayes, May 9, 1856, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts. The italics are Greeley's.

[82] Letter to G. E. Baker, April 28, 1859, *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, II, 255.

[83] Letter to Mrs. R. M. Whipple (not dated), Greeley MSS. Italics are Greeley's.

ward nor his New York associates could afford to have the powerful *Tribune* on their back, and an open break rendered such a result inevitable. Golden silence promised better than reproachful words, and in time the impetuous Greeley might forget and forgive.

The future seemed to justify the procedure. The *Tribune* failed to render any real support to Seward in 1856, but it evidenced a friendly disposition and appealed for Fremont entirely on the ground of availability. The strange hobnobbing with Douglas two years later may have been designed to ruin Seward prospects for 1860, but after all, even the Weed faction acquiesced in that movement. As the campaign of 1860 approached, Weed called more frequently at the *Tribune* office. Seward now and then received an invitation to visit the little farm at Chappaqua where Greeley spent odd hours in agricultural experiments. The Greeley family paid more than one friendly visit to the Weed home in Albany.[84] And ere long Weed reported the *Tribune* mentor "right at last, politically." [85]

But the Albany boss miscalculated. It is doubtful if Horace Greeley had forgotten or forgiven, and certainly he was not "right at last politically." He reciprocated the friendly solicitations of Seward and Weed with an outward show of enthusiasm, but kept his own counsel. As a matter of fact, ever since he

[84] *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, II, 268.

[85] *Seward at Washington, 1846-1861*, 360; letter of Seward home during April, 1859, dispatched from New York City.

turned upon Douglas early in 1859 and pronounced him "a low and dangerous demagogue," [86] Edward Bates had occupied a prominent place in his thinking. A slaveholder of Whig antecedents and conservative inclinations who looked upon slavery as "an evil to be restricted" rather than "a good to be diffused," the Missouri judge seemed to fulfill all the requirements of a candidate not likely "to load the team heavier" than it would "pull through." [87]

In February, 1860, the *Tribune* began to discuss presidential timber. Studiously avoiding any indication of personal repugnance toward Seward, and professing no desire to influence the convention on the question of his availability, it adroitly suggested that in case the Republican party possessed insufficient strength to elect whomsoever it willed, the logical man of the hour was Bates.[88] Subsequent editorials during March and April continued in the same strain, endorsing Seward's anti-slavery position, but urging first consideration for such doubtful states as Pennsylvania and Indiana, in selecting a candidate.[89]

Weed must have read the handwriting on the wall. Greeley had been identified in the public mind as a Seward supporter for over twenty years, and to all appearances he spoke dispassionately with the

[86] Letter to F. Newhall, January 8, 1859, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

[87] December 4, 1858, in answer to an enquiry, Greeley expressed preference for Bates; William H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik, *Herndon's Lincoln*, II, 413; Greeley, 389.

[88] *Daily Tribune*, February 20, 1860.

[89] *Ibid.*, March 24, 1860.

larger interests of the party at heart. If he went to Chicago and preached such a doctrine, the damage might be irreparable. Intentionally or otherwise, the versatile editor had maneuvered himself into a position from which he might undo the plans of the Albany "Dictator" and crush his ambitious protégé. And upon just such a course he had resolved.

Convention day approached and a vast concourse of Republican zealots flocked to Chicago amid boundless enthusiasm. The New Yorkers made up an extremely large aggregation, including a rough element from New York City presumably imported by Weed to overcome the numerical advantage of the Illinoisans. They crowded into the Richmond House, champagne and whiskey flowing freely and adding zest to the fervor and excitement of an affair which assumed all the aspects of a gigantic celebration.[90]

A thousand people packed the Tremont House, the headquarters of Seward opposition, Greeley scintillating among the number as a substitute delegate from Oregon.[91] Some merely stood and stared at the New York sage as he shuffled about in the proverbial long, white coat; others pressed close, hopeful of catching some of the words of wisdom which were supposed to fall from his lips.[92]

[90] Don Piatt, *Memories of Men Who Saved the Union*, 154; *Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, II, 184.

[91] On this substitution, see Parton, 442; Robert H. Browne, *Abraham Lincoln and the Men of His Time*, II, 399.

[92] Murat Halstead, *A History of the National Political Conventions of 1860*, 121.

The convention opened May 16, and the fight was on between the "irrepressibles" backing the candidacy of Seward, and the "conservatives" hopeful of uniting on Bates, Cameron, Lincoln, or McLean. The "irrepressibles" scored first in connection with the platform,[93] as well as in defeating an effort to require a majority of all electoral votes for nomination.[94] Flushed with victory, and cognizant of the inability of their opponents to coöperate, they urged the immediate selection of candidates, and only the lack of tally sheets prevented a procedure likely to have chosen the New York favorite on the first ballot. As the convention adjourned at the end of the second day, Greeley was "terrified" and he telegraphed the *Tribune* that Seward would be nominated.[95]

But, although "conservative" stock had fallen to a low ebb, all was not lost. The influence of Greeley had done a great deal to pave the way for an anti-Seward combine. He had spoken with most telling effect among those naturally inclined toward the New York candidate, who were impressed by the willingness of a supposed friend and admirer to sacrifice personal attachments in the interest of Republican success.[96] He had visited caucus after caucus insisting that to nominate Seward spelled party de-

[93] *Proceedings of the First Three Republican Conventions*, 135-142.
[94] *Ibid.*, 129.
[95] *Ibid.*, 143; Halstead, 130, 140; *Daily Tribune*, May 18, 1860.
[96] *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, II, 274.

feat, now and then bringing forward Lane of Indiana, Curtin of Pennsylvania, or Kirkwood of Iowa to substantiate the contention.[97]

And there was much activity that night at the Tremont House. The effort to form a successful coalition upon some one acceptable to the pivotal states of Pennsylvania and Indiana succeeded. After hesitating between Lincoln and Bates for a time, Indiana's delegation finally went over to the Illinoisan,[98] and the promise of a cabinet position for Cameron virtually swung the Keystone State into the Lincoln column.[99]

Although the *Tribune* had endorsed Lincoln as "a man of the People, a champion of Free Labor,"[100] and had spoken enthusiastically of the Cooper Institute Speech, Greeley distrusted his lack of experience in national affairs, and in all the early maneuvers he clung to Bates tenaciously "as a safer man." [101] Either ignorant of the new trend of affairs on the eventful night of May 17, or lacking confidence in its final fruition, he still anticipated no concentration of the anti-Seward forces the next day. But, although his part in the Lincoln movement had been largely negative in character, "old Greeley" had performed effectively, and John Defrees later

[97] Addison G. Proctor, *Lincoln and the Convention of 1860*, 9.
[98] James F. Rhodes, *History of the United States*, II, 471.
[99] *Ibid.*, II, 467; *Daily Tribune*, May 17, 1860.
[100] *Daily Tribune*, February 25, 1860.
[101] Proctor, 10.

assigned him the credit for having "slaughtered Seward and saved the party." [102]

When the Convention finished balloting the next morning, Abraham Lincoln had been selected the Republican standard-bearer. Thurlow Weed said some bad words and returned to more friendly soil. Horace Greeley inwardly exulted, and remarked laconically: "The past is dead."

[102] Rhodes, II, 471.

Chapter II

SECESSION, COMPROMISE, OR WAR

With the nomination of a "Black" Republican at Chicago on a platform distinctly opposed to the extension of slavery in the National domain, threats of disunion immediately issued from the South. Many sincerely believed that the election of Lincoln would inevitably split the Union asunder, and Northern Democrats utilized the situation to enlist the coöperation of some wavering Republican adherents. On the other hand, such threats had been voiced repeatedly during the preceding decade, and for the most part, supporters of the Lincoln ticket were inclined to treat them as little more than the usual bold gasconade.

The right of secession had not been a doctrine peculiar to the South. Ever since the formation of the Constitution, more or less doubt pervaded the minds of prominent leaders as to whether or not the Union should or would remain intact in case of serious conflict between national and sectional interests. As early as the winter of 1803-4, plans were on foot for a separate northern confederacy, emanating from important political circles in Massachusetts as a result of the Louisiana Cession.[1] A few years later

[1] *Correspondence Between John Quincy Adams and Several Citizens of Massachusetts*, Second edition, 18.

a movement gained headway for a convention of delegates from the New England states to consider a similar project.[2]

In 1811, Josiah Quincy, a distinguished member of the House of Representatives, declared it the duty of the states to prepare for a separation in case Louisiana was admitted to the Union — "amicably if they can, violently if they must." [3] At the time of the Missouri Compromise, even John Quincy Adams was thinking in terms of a "new union of thirteen or fourteen states unpolluted with slavery," and he wrote in his diary: "If the Union must be dissolved, slavery is precisely the question upon which it ought to break." [4] And in 1843, the same Adams collaborated with Joshua R. Giddings and several others in warning the country that the annexation of Texas "would be identical with dissolution" of the Union.[5]

During the two decades preceding the Civil War, the number of secession threats increased somewhat in proportion to the growing bitterness of sectional controversy. An extreme abolitionist group, led by William Lloyd Garrison and his *Liberator*, placed the cause of freedom above the love of Union.[6] In 1856, New Hampshire opened the hall of the House of Representatives to an abolition convention and listened without protest to addresses by Garrison

[2] *Ibid.*, 24.
[3] Edmund Quincy, *Life of Josiah Quincy*, 206.
[4] *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams* (Charles F. Adams, ed.), IV, 531; V, 12.
[5] *Niles National Register*, May 13, 1843.
[6] *Liberator*, 24:106.

and his rabid counterpart, Wendell Phillips. A union with slaveholders became increasingly detestable to those outraged by the pro-slavery advance in Kansas, and the extent to which secession sentiment was fostered in the North is evidenced by the willingness of such a prominent character as Nathaniel Banks, shortly before he was elected Speaker of the House, to "let the Union slide" whenever the South gained control of the National administration.[7]

Finally, in 1857, at the call of ninety citizens of Worcester, Massachusetts, a convention gathered "to consider the practicability and expediency of a separation between Free and Slave States," and it pronounced the existing Union a failure.[8] A subsequent call was issued for a similar convention to meet in Cleveland, bearing some seven thousand signatures representative of seventeen different states but chiefly emanating from New York and Massachusetts.[9]

The disunion movement in the South proved to be no idle boast. South Carolina seceded in December, 1860, and six other members of the Union soon pledged their allegiance to the "Confederate States of America." Surprise, confusion, and doubt reigned in the loyal states, augmented by the distraction of conflicting views. Men hardly knew their own minds as they faced the alarming contingency of seven

[7] Wendell P. and Francis J. Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison, The Story of His Life Told by His Children*, III, 415.

[8] *Liberator*, 27:2; *Proceedings of the State Disunion Convention of 1857* (Reported by J. M. W. Yerrinton), 11.

[9] *Liberator*, 27:158.

rebellious states in arms. Neither resolved upon coercion, nor reconciled to peaceable secession, the North succumbed to a period of irresolution bordering on despair.[10]

In the midst of such vacillation, however, the sentiment generally prevailed that some form of peaceful reconciliation should be utilized to quiet southern disaffection. On every side the general impulse predominated to do nothing and say nothing in any manner likely to fan the flame of disunion.[11] Business interests of the East, represented by such prominent financiers as August Belmont, Hamilton Fish, and Moses H. Grinnell, were thoroughly alarmed by the anticipated loss of an extremely profitable Southern market. Abolitionism, now held in a large measure responsible for the calamity which threatened the nation, experienced a decidedly reactionary opposition, and Wendell Phillips once more suffered rough treatment at the hands of an irate mob while attempting an anti-slavery discourse in Boston.[12] Breckinridge and Bell supporters quite generally turned toward compromise and conciliation in an effort to calm the South and save the Union. Even Republicans, staggered by a full realization of southern determination, wondered why they had voted the Lincoln ticket.

It was soon evident that all Northerners, irrespec-

[10] G. S. Merriam, *The Life and Times of Samuel Bowles*, I, 274.

[11] Addison G. Proctor, *Lincoln and the Convention of 1860*, 18, 19.

[12] *Ibid.*, 19, 20.

tive of party or opinion, faced the three alternatives of peaceable secession, compromise, or war as solutions of the ugly situation, and during the remaining months of 1860 a very strong disposition was manifest to accept the first alternative and let the erring ones depart in peace. Of course, the Garrisonians welcomed southern disaffection as a simple and efficient means of ridding the Union and the Constitution of an obnoxious institution.[13] The *Liberator* said complacently: "If the South . . . decides to try the experiment of an independent existence, let it go with our good will."[14]

The expression of such sentiment was by no means confined to abolitionist organs, however. The *New York Sun,* now under the control of several young religious enthusiasts and read by a constituency largely Democratic, bluntly advocated a constitutional amendment legalizing secession, as a diplomatic means of removing henceforth, the desire for disunion.[15] The *New York Journal of Commerce*, with the veteran Gerard Hallock still at the helm, would willingly acquiesce in disunion as the first step in the reconstruction of a government which "must be reviewed and revised to adapt it to the times and the altered condition of our population." [16] The *New*

[13] Elbert J. Benton, *The Movement for Peace Without Victory During the Civil War,* (Western Historical Society Publication, No. 99), 3.

[14] *Liberator*, 31:4.

[15] *New York Sun*, December 8, 1860, quoted in Frank M. O'Brien, *The Story of the Sun*, New edition, 129.

[16] *New York Journal of Commerce*, January 12, 1861, quoted in William H. Hallock, *Life of Gerard Hallock*, 98.

York Herald, boasting a larger circulation than any newspaper in the metropolis, upheld secession as the right of revolution wisely utilized by the Fathers against the tyranny of England and handed down to later generations as a legitimate instrument for the expression of public opinion.[17]

Even in Republican circles, a considerable element preferred peaceable disunion to either compromise or civil war.[18] The *Springfield Republican* minimized the importance of continuing the Union, while the *New York Times*, the *New York Courier and Enquirer*, and *Albany Evening Journal*, all substantial representatives of the free soil and Republican press, more or less openly counseled reconciliation to the recent estrangement.[19]

But the most influential exponent of southern alienation was Horace Greeley. The *Tribune* admitted shortly after the election, that although the right of secession "may be a revolutionary one . . . it exists nevertheless." A state had no right to remain in the Union and defy the laws, but to withdraw was "quite another matter." [20] It maintained that the Union should be preserved only so long as it was "beneficial and satisfactory to all parties concerned," and should not be held together by force whenever it had "ceased to cohere by the mutual attraction of

[17] *New York Herald*, November 9, 1860.

[18] A. K. McClure, *Abraham Lincoln and Men of War Times*, 317, 318.

[19] Wallace McCamant, *Lincoln in the Winter of 1860-61*, 4.

[20] *Daily Tribune*, November 9, 1860.

its parts." [21] If the southern people after calm and deliberate consideration demanded separation, they should "be permitted to go in peace." Undesirable as it might be "to see a single star erased from . . . (the) Federal flag," subjugation of South Carolina and the cotton states inhabited by five million people with at least half a million "able and willing to shoulder muskets," was not only impossible, but was clearly inconsistent with the genius of institutions "essentially republican, and averse to the employment of military force to fasten one section of the confederacy to the other." [22]

Such was the *Tribune* doctrine as expounded to a wide circle of adherents during November. The forces which prompted it are fairly discernible. Greeley also faced the three alternatives of peaceable secession, compromise, or war. Firmly intrenched upon the Chicago Platform — in part the product of his own effort and convictions — he refused to grant the least concession on the question of slavery extension. Human bondage had stamped itself upon his conscience as a stupendous social evil, the total extinction of which he fondly contemplated at no distant day.[23] A southern slaveholding confederacy at least promised "an effectual quietus to all the plans and projects hitherto so ardently cherished for . . . (its) territorial expansion." [24] Dis-

[21] *Ibid.*, November 19, 1860.

[22] *Ibid.*, November 16, 24, 30, 1860.

[23] Letter to Mrs. R. M. Whipple, April 2, 1856, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

[24] *Daily Tribune*, November 20, 1860; March 26, 1861.

union, he asserted later, might have been a "calamity," but "complicity in Slavery extension" would have been "guilt." [25] Rather than compromise, he would pay the price of disunion for curtailment of the cursed institution, "try to thank God and take Courage." [26]

Inclined by natural disposition and temperament toward pacifism and non-resistance, Greeley also shrank from the alternative of war. For that matter, the North generally, manifested no disposition to deal with secession by the employment of armed force, and the advocacy of such a method for calming the troubled waters during the closing months of 1860 promised no results beyond adding to the general confusion of public opinion and incurring upon the author a charge of ill-timed jingoism.[27]

Turning then to acquiescence in peaceable separation as the only remaining alternative, the *Tribune* professed to believe that the South would ultimately cling to the Union if freely offered the alternative of secession. Such reasoning rested upon the assumption that the southern people were loyal at heart, and thus far had been duped by a small minority of "Fire Eaters," who deliberately preferred the election of Lincoln in order to secure a plausible excuse for secession. The methods pursued by this slaveholding minority in attempting "to carry things by a

[25] Horace Greeley, *Recollections of a Busy Life*, 397.

[26] Letter to B. Brockway, August 14, 1861, Greeley MSS.

[27] *Daily Tribune*, August 16, 1861; E. C. Kirkland, *The Peacemakers of 1864*, 61.

sudden rush," without allowing the people a deliberate expression of opinion, indicated an inherent weakness in their movement.[28]

In time, however, the southern populace would realize the odius position in which it had been placed. Secession in the abstract had offered certain illusory advantages, but the actual problems of a separate existence would soon bring disillusionment. For example, every seceded state would face the problem of taxation, a problem on which South Carolina had already manifested a certain "hesitancy and squeamishness." The taxing of people who owned no slaves for the benefit of the minority, presented a delicate issue.[29] Then, how would "Secessia" secure the return of fugitive slaves, once a recognition of independence placed the recalcitrant states in the same relation to the Union as any foreign power? [30] The difficulties of attempting to operate free from interference, a "peculiar social, economical, and political system" would eventually prove insurmountable.[31]

Illinois and the Northwest had been increasing rapidly in wealth and population under free institutions; if any cotton state hoped to rival that prosperity, she must cling to the Union as her great "reliance" and diminish the supply of negroes instead of increasing it through a reopening of the slave trade.[32] Any interference with the trade of southern

[28] *Daily Tribune*, November 12, 1860.
[29] *Ibid.*, November 14, 1860.
[30] *Ibid.*, December 3, 1860.
[31] *Ibid.*, November 13, 1860; March 25, 1861.
[32] *Ibid.*, March 7, 1861.

ports manned by Federal fortifications would result in a material advantage to New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, and a two hundred million dollar American cotton trade would be threatened by Indian and African competitors.[33] Finally the very principle of voluntary secession upon which the Southerners proposed to build a new confederacy promised a counter revolution in the near future, certain to "undo what the first accomplished." [34] Once these facts were forced upon the attention of the southern people through the unyielding performance of natural social and economic laws, the secession movement would tend to succumb beneath the weight of its own load and disappear eventually, as "a mere bubble" similar to that of 1832.[35]

In order to realize the program of peaceably breaking down southern resistance, the North merely needed to pursue a Fabian policy of "masterly inactivity." [36] The *Tribune* would be patient, "neither speaking daggers, or using them." Threats of coercion would only irritate the Unionist element and drive them into the hands of the "Fire Eaters." [37] But "a little time to cool, a little time for reflection" and the population would soon return to their senses. If the North would only "give them rope," the loyal supporters of the Union would

[33] *Ibid.*, January 22, March 16, 1861.
[34] *Ibid.*, February 14, 1861.
[35] *Ibid.*, November 12, 1860.
[36] *Ibid.*, November 21, 1860.
[37] *Ibid.*, November 30, 1860.

speedily fulfill their destiny, and the leaders of the secession movement would "yet dangle at every cross road in the South." [38]

But sincere as Greeley may have been in his efforts, the *Tribune* policy of "masterly inactivity" failed to elicit a favorable response below the Mason and Dixon line. Instead, the South quite generally accepted any manifestation of kindness and forbearance on the part of the North as a sign of weakness and concession. The Governor of South Carolina, in urging the adoption of a secession ordinance, cited the declarations of the *Tribune* to the effect that separation from the Federal Union was justified as surely as the American colonies rightfully rebelled against the authority of George the Third and his government, and added that "in this emergency our worst enemies have become our best friends." [39] On the eve of secession in Alabama, two former Congressmen wrote the President of the convention: "Possibly the most important fact we can communicate is the opinion generally obtained in Washington that the secession of five or more States would prevent or put an end to coercion, and the *New York Tribune*, the most influential of Republican journals, concedes that the secession of so many States would make coercion impracticable." [40]

[38] *Ibid.*, February 9, March 27, 1861.

[39] *Memoir of Thurlow Weed* (Thurlow Weed Barnes, ed.), II, 490.

[40] *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series IV, vol. I, 47; quotation is taken from a letter of J. L. Pugh and

The *Tribune* policy not only encouraged the further alienation of Southern loyalty, but it discouraged the formation of public sentiment in the North favorable to the maintenance of the Union. The Greeley organ claimed a total circulation in April, 1860, of almost three hundred thousand — the largest of any newspaper in the world.[41] At least three-fourths of that number represented subscribers to the Weekly and Semi-Weekly living outside the metropolis in rural districts, particularly in the Adirondack region of northern New York and the Western Reserve of Ohio where New Englanders largely predominated. Considering the fact that one copy generally sufficed for one or more families, the *Tribune* influence probably extended among not less than a million readers. Such an enormous circulation, coupled with the ready acceptance of Greeley editorials by the farmers of the Northwest as their political gospel, entitled the paper to the distinction of being the most influential organ of public opinion in the country.[42]

J. L. M. Curry to the President of the Alabama convention, dated January 10, 1861. Alexander Stephens, in his *War Between the States*, quotes from the *American Conflict*, a two volume history of the Civil War by Greeley, to substantiate the right of secession by the "pointed, strong and unmistakable language" of an influential Northern leader. See Alexander H. Stephens, *A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States*, I, 518.

[41] *Daily Tribune*, April 10, 1860. The circulation figures for 1861 were practically the same; see April 10, 1861, issue.

[42] William R. Thayer, *Life and Letters of John Hay*, 171. The power and influence of the *Tribune* was highly respected in the South among its bitterest foes. Troup, a southern editor, writing at the outbreak of the war, said with reference to the journal: "Circulating amongst the families, men, women, and children, scattered

The peculiar significance of the Greeley appeal on the secession issue is readily discernible in view of the fact that the *Tribune* had been identified for years as a staunch opponent of pro-slavery interests, speaking to a constituency Republican in profession and anti-slavery in its antecedents — the very element which alone could be expected to form the nucleus of a northern movement in behalf of preserving the Union and enforcing obedience to the Constitution and laws of the land. No wonder its course caused Lincoln concern during the critical winter of 1860-61 when northern apathy and southern perfidy conspired together to break the bonds of loyalty to a common allegiance and a common destiny.

In spite of *Tribune* propaganda, however, northern opinion gradually assumed a firmer tone toward the South with the beginning of the new year. Once South Carolina had committed the overt act, the real significance of secession slowly impressed itself upon the consciousness of the North, and increasingly the sentiment prevailed that whatever the means utilized to solve the national crisis, the house should not be divided. Nothing contributed more to arouse the public from irresolution and doubt to a sense of

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from Maine to Minnesota, its influence is many times greater than that of any paper in this country. It is, in fact, to a very great extent, the representative of Northern opinion — for it is really the leading organ of the controlling party of that section, which has grown to its present strength by the assistance and through the teachings of that Journal." See Troup, *Senator Hammond and the Tribune*, 19.

national obligation than the practical difficulties of peaceable disunion already suggested to the South by the *Tribune*. Secession in actual practice was indeed proving to be entirely different than secession in the abstract. The Federal government possessed property in South Carolina and other cotton states purchased with funds contributed by the American people. In spite of South Carolinian estrangement, the Constitution and laws of the United States still remained the supreme law of the land, and technically they were still subject to enforcement in every state of the Union, just as customs duties were still subject to collection at all southern ports of entry.

Although there had been a strong first impulse on the part of many to allow the erring sisters to depart in peace, the attempt to depart stirred the North to a determination to preserve the Union. In the very nature of things, the South either could not or would not depart peacefully. Northern indifference and sympathy had been interpreted as a sign of weakness, and secession ordinances were passed with a certain boldness and defiance. South Carolinians refused to obey United States law and even threatened to seize Federal fortifications. Every move in that direction strengthened the hopes of Abraham Lincoln for the Union, and peaceable secession of necessity slowly faded into the background.

The New York Evening Post observed the trend of events in January, and it recorded with satisfaction the change in public opinion which demanded

obedience to Federal law in decided contrast with the indifference "in which the secession movement found the country." [43] Even the *Journal of Commerce* spoke of a public sentiment which would "sustain the Government in protecting the property of the United States wherever it may be found." [44] The *Times*, thoroughly converted, demanded the reënforcement of Fort Sumter, and declared: "from every state of the mighty West, when the occasion calls for it, will come the same demand, backed by millions of men and of money, that the Union must and shall be preserved." [45] The *New York World* sounded warnings of a plot to seize Washington, and averred that if such an attempt materialized "you will see around the capital half of the millions of the North in arms." [46]

Greeley also observed the changing spirit of the North and began to lose confidence in the *Tribune* program. The Fabian policy not only faced the obstacle of northern determination, but it appeared incapable of breaking down southern disaffection and resistance. The South had been given more rope, but no popular reaction had left the "Fire Eaters" dangling at every cross-road. Instead, the projected slaveholding Confederacy materialized and promised new difficulties and dangers in the form of for-

[43] *New York Evening Post*, January 11, 1861.
[44] *New York Journal of Commerce*, January 5, 1861; quoted in Hallock, 93.
[45] *New York Times*, January 3, March 6, 1861.
[46] *New York World*, January 5, 1861.

eign complications. In spite of the confident predictions of Greeley, Louisiana joined the seceders and thereby jeopardized an important outlet for northern trade.[47] The *Tribune* recognized the unwelcome possibility of cutting off communication with the Gulf, or perhaps allowing the mouth of the Mississippi to fall into the hands of an unfriendly foreign power. Still other hazards loomed in the distance. What should prevent the new Confederacy from starting a war with Mexico and Central America designed to further extend slave territory? And why should it not be "the harbinger of the reopening of the slave trade?" Finally, what should prevent an "alliance with foreign states, to circumscribe the growth of liberal institutions?" [48]

These considerations prompted the *Tribune* to modify its policy. Had the North remained indifferent to southern aggressiveness, and had unforeseen obstacles not rendered the Fabian policy of inactivity highly impracticable, the seceding states might have either quietly retired or perceived the folly of their ways and returned once more to the fold. In that event, Horace Greeley would doubtless have been recognized by a grateful American people, either as the great pacificator, or the saviour of the Union. But no such good fortune lay in store for him, and the sudden turn of affairs demanded that the *Tribune* bend to the storm or be caught eventually in an embarrassing position.

[47] *Daily Tribune*, November 30, 1860.
[48] *Ibid.*, January 29, 1861.

Consequently, the versatile journal began sounding a new note — sort of an undertone at first during December, but gradually increasing in volume and intensity through the early months of 1861, until, by April the original strain was scarcely perceptible. First, it observed that all Federal fortifications within the confines of South Carolina had been assigned by her legislature to the Washington government and that nothing in the National Constitution authorized the state to resume possession; therefore, any failure to effect a satisfactory agreement on that point forestalled peaceable secession.[49] A little later, it concluded that, in order "to make herself really independent," a state proposing disunion must seize and hold all the forts within her borders, thus rendering it incumbent upon the President of the United States "to repel force with force." [50] And it advised warning South Carolina of such a contingency, as the most effective manner of discouraging secession.[51] When the state finally passed the disunion ordinance, the *Tribune* branded the procedure "treason," although scarcely more than a month before, it had conceded "the right of peaceful secession at her own pleasure." [52]

During subsequent months, Greeley counsel proceeded in a similar strain. Fort Sumter should be reënforced promptly and effectively. In case of delay,

[49] *Ibid.*, December 3, 7, 1860.
[50] *Ibid.*, December 11, 1860.
[51] *Ibid.*, December 18, 1860.
[52] *Ibid.*, November 12, December 22, 1860.

"a spontaneous rush of volunteers from the North by sea in numbers" might be the answer of an impatient North to the lack of energy and decision on the part of the Federal government.[53] As for the states identified with the Confederacy, they might "play at being out of the Union"; they might "govern themselves and arm themselves to their heart's content"; but they would not be permitted "to rob the United States, to disobey or evade the revenue laws, or to hold unlawful intercourse with foreign nations." [54]

Congress, the Executive, and the State authorities were urged to make instant preparations "to protect the country from civil war." With a strong force at Washington "to protect the Capital and Congress, and an army to defend the Constitution . . . treason now so rampant . . . (would) roar as gently as a sucking dove." [55] For, concluded the erstwhile pacifist editor, "though we acknowledge prayer to be indispensable to the saving of individuals and nations, we nevertheless consider powder a good thing." [56]

Strangely enough, the *Tribune* continued to advocate, parallel with such utterances, the doctrine of peaceable secession. Enough specifications were attached to its operation, however, to render attainment beyond the range of human possibility. The

[53] *Ibid.*, January 4, 10, 1861.
[54] *Ibid.*, February 13, 1861.
[55] *Ibid.*, January 10, 1861.
[56] *Ibid.*, January 12, 1861.

right of revolution had been cited in the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson as the right of all men.[57] But, in order that such a right might be "peacefully and constitutionally attained," a fair, deliberate vote had to be polled of all citizens in a State contemplating separation. Thus far, strong arm methods had been used in every case of disunion according to the *Tribune*, and there was no reason to believe that the people preferred separation. States should not be coerced into remaining with the Union, but neither should any "be coerced out of it . . . by the banded and armed traitors throughout the South." [58]

Furthermore, the Union could not be legally dissolved except as it had been formed — "by the free consent of all the parties concerned" [59] — and such procedure necessitated a National convention representing all the states. Only with the consent of a majority of the delegates might any State release itself from the binding effects of a compact to which it had once subscribed.[60]

Some of the western farmers who had for years eagerly accepted the *Tribune* as a weekly addition to their political bible, must have experienced difficulty interpreting the Greeley gospel during that critical period from the election of Lincoln to the firing on

[57] *Ibid.*, December 4, 1860.
[58] *Ibid.*, January 14, 1861.
[59] *Ibid.*, January 21, 1861.
[60] *Ibid.*, March 12, 1861; Horace Greeley, *The American Conflict*, I, 405; see also *Weekly Tribune*, June 1, 1861.

Fort Sumter. By declaring that a State had to seize the Federal fortifications within her borders in order to be independent, and insisting at the same time upon the duty of the Federal government to meet such procedure with coercion, the *Tribune* virtually decreed peaceable secession impossible. It professed a willingness to let the erring ones depart in peace, but insisted upon repression in case they dared to effect their independence. To be sure, one avenue of peaceable escape had been left open, but it offered all the possibilities of a camel passing through the eye of a needle. No one could seriously contemplate a National convention in which a majority of the delegates would deliberately vote to disband the Union. Horace Greeley had turned a sharp corner as smoothly as possible. The doctrine of peaceable secession, so readily accepted in November, but so unpopular in January, had been virtually discarded. But the venerable editor refused to confess the inconsistency, and met the ever recurring charges of disloyalty based on his earlier position with a placid reference to the latest edition of the *Tribune* gospel.[61]

In the meantime, with peaceable secession out of the question, many turned toward compromise and

[61] The *Sentinel*, a Democratic paper of Indiana, in the April 15, 1861, issue, noted the change of front on the part of the *Tribune* with respect to the secession issue, and attributed it to the protective tariff and a desire to serve "the cotton lords of New England and the ironmasters of Pennsylvania." See J. A. Woodburn, *Party Politics in Indiana During the Civil War*, A. H. A. Report, 1902, I, 237, 238.

conciliation as the only alternative to a disastrous civil war. Northern Democrats, particularly, urged concessions, but a very considerable number of Republicans as well, including some of the most able and trusted leaders, indicated a willingness to forego the Chicago Platform sufficiently to satisfy the pro-slavery malcontents and return the unruly Southern States to their former allegiance.

The *New York Herald*, a Democratic organ of considerable repute still under the guidance of the notorious James Gordon Bennett, immediately after the election urged the Republican nominee to allay the fears of the South by repudiating the Chicago Platform, by announcing a determination to enforce the fugitive slave law, and by pledging support to such constitutional amendments as should guarantee to slavery its every demand.[62] If the Republican party would assume the task of "reconstruction," it might not only save the Union, but retain itself in power for the next twenty years.[63]

The *Journal of Commerce* and *National Intelligencer* (Washington) — the latter a past advocate of Whig conservatism edited by the veteran W. W. Seaton — likewise hoped for a plan of pacification which would meet with universal approval from the loyal conservatives of the nation.[64] Thurlow Weed and the *Albany Evening Journal* labored incessantly

[62] *New York Herald*, December 17, 1860.

[63] *Ibid.*, January 9, 1861.

[64] *New York Journal of Commerce*, May 17, 1861, quoted in Hallock, 74; *National Intelligencer*, January 12, 1861.

in behalf of compromise, endeavoring to persuade the Republicans to backwater sufficiently to concede slavery all the common territory below the Missouri Compromise line.[65] And the *Times*, while more hesitant to embrace the movement, finally consented to some arrangement promising maintenance of the Union.[66]

Although Greeley had likewise virtually abandoned the alternative of peaceable secession, he still refused to participate in any move to conciliate the South by further concessions to slavery in the territories. His extreme aversion to compromise was based upon a certain lofty idealism which politicians of the Weed type could never understand. He still lingered on as one of the last representatives of that celebrated school of New England transcendentalists imbued with a philanthropical urge to promote the welfare of the individual and of society. He had subscribed to party platforms, formed political alliances, and participated in numerous political campaigns, but conditioning all in the last analysis was his unflagging interest in the rights and welfare of the common man.

For two decades, Greeley had reflected that idealism through the columns of the *Tribune*. He had accepted a portion of Fourierism in the hope that it might prove a boon to the workingman.[67] He sup-

[65] See *New York Times*, January 3, 1861.

[66] *Ibid.*, February 14, 1861.

[67] Whitelaw Reid, *Horace Greeley*, 11, 12. Greeley was personally interested in a Fourierite association — The American Phalanx at Red Bank, N. J.

ported a protective tariff with untiring devotion — not to serve capital, but to enable the common man to acquire a more just compensation for the fruits of his labor.[68] And finally, free land for the landless as a last refuge for the victims of a poorly adjusted industrial mechanism, had always formed one of the keenest objects of his desires.[69] Although he had striven to elevate humanity by preaching temperance, intelligence, morality, and religion, at the bottom of all reform, he recognized "the Bread problem." [70] Fourierism and protection to industry had offered partial solutions to that problem, but men would never be completely emancipated from thraldom and misery and enabled to justly appreciate the higher things of life, until the great West offered to every worthy applicant a free farm.[71] And now slavery threatened to spread its blight over the common domain and block the onward march of freedom. No wonder the *Tribune* spoke of compromise as a national calamity!

Probably no one had followed the trend of public

[68] John R. Commons, "Horace Greeley and the Working Class Origins of the Republican Party," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXIV, 473, 474.

[69] Greeley never wavered or relented in his fight for free lands. During his short term in Congress in 1848, he introduced a homestead bill which received little consideration. In 1854, the *Tribune* was thoroughly disgusted with the "hybrid Graduation Preëmption bill," but favored its passage as at least a step in the direction of a genuine homestead act — a measure finally secured in 1862. See George W. Julian, *Political Recollections, 1840-1872*, 103; *Daily Tribune*, July 22, 1854.

[70] Letter to Mrs. Pauline Davis, September 1, 1852, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

[71] Letter to B. Brockway, November 19, 1847, Greeley MSS.

opinion with closer scrutiny or greater anxiety than Abraham Lincoln. He also hoped to avert civil war, but rejected either peaceable secession or further concessions to slavery as a solution of the national dilemma. He had observed with grave concern the damaging vagaries of the *Tribune* on peaceable disunion immediately after the election. By the middle of December, however, the new note struck by Greeley began to reverberate, and the President-elect had reason to suspect that the New York editor might yet throw the weight of his influence on the right side of the scales. An exchange of notes ensued and the result was extremely gratifying. Greeley confessed: "if the seceding State or States go to fighting and defying the laws, the Union being yet undissolved save by their own say-so, I guess they will have to be made to behave themselves." On the matter of concession, his reply was unequivocal. "Let the Union slide," he wailed, "it may be reconstructed; let Presidents be assassinated, we can elect more; let the Republicans be defeated and crushed, we shall rise again. But another nasty compromise . . . will so thoroughly disgrace and humiliate us that we can never again raise our heads." [72] The two uncompromising foes of slavery extension stood upon virtually the same ground.

From December to the outbreak of war, the *Tribune* launched repeated onslaughts against the com-

[72] J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, III, 258; Greeley to Lincoln, December 22, 1860.

promisers. To make concessions on a vital principle would only incite "constant bullying and menace by proffering rewards for turbulence and giving bounties for treason." The Crittenden plan of compromise and the efforts of the House Committee of Thirty-three were rejected as implying "timidity and apology on the part of certain supporters of Mr. Lincoln," and the paper exclaimed vociferously: "Let us retract nothing; let us not yield a single inch." [73]

From the middle of January on, an increasingly belligerent tone was manifest. "Stand Firm!" it counselled; "let us know once for all whether the slave power is really stronger than the Union. Let us have it decided whether the Mexican system of rebellion can be successfully introduced in this country as a means of carrying an election after it has been fairly lost at the polls." [74] During the latter part of February, there appeared in bold headliners at the top of the editorial columns: "No Compromise! No Concessions to Traitors! The Constitution As It Is," [75] and a fortnight later the journal doubted if bloodshed could be averted except by the most adequate military preparations.[76] The

[73] *Daily Tribune*, December 12, 1860. The *Tribune* also objected to compromise on the ground that it would present the Republican party to the South as a group of selfish office seekers, who, once in power, had discarded their principles. *Daily Tribune*, August 23, 1861.

[74] *Ibid.*, January 17, 1861.

[75] Appeared from February 18 to March 2, 1861.

[76] *Ibid.*, March 16, 1861.

pacifist editor was preparing his mind and heart for war — the last alternative!

While Greeley was thus traversing the devious path from peaceable secession to war, the New York political kettle had never ceased to boil. The general effect of the Chicago episode was to enhance the political fortunes of the one now credited quite generally with having slaughtered Seward. Greeley was expected to exert considerable influence with the incoming administration at Washington. One cartoon depicted him bearing the new President into the White House on his shoulders,[77] and there were rumors afloat that he would be the next postmaster-general.[78] Such preferment, added to the effectiveness with which the *Tribune* advocate had coöperated with the "conservatives" at Chicago to dispatch Seward, aroused the bitterest hostility on the part of the Weed faction.

Raymond, especially, felt mortified at the success of his old time rival. He had revealed the essential contents of the letter dissolving the political partnership of Seward, Weed, and Greeley, and Seward supporters quite generally accepted them as explaining the defeat of their idol. Greeley retaliated by severely reproaching the recipient of the letter for divulging a confidential communication. The quarrel which

[77] Don Seitz, *Horace Greeley*, 226.

[78] Letter of Joshua Leavitt to Chase, November 7, 1860, *Miscellaneous Letters to Chase, 1842-1870*, A. H. A. Report, 1902, II, 484; S. D. Brummer, *Political History of New York State During the Period of the Civil War*, Columbia University Studies, XXXIX, 129.

ensued assumed more than ordinary significance.[79] A certain element showed a tendency to revolt from Weed dictation, accept the much discussed letter as their platform, and join the Anti-Weed forces, under the leadership of the notorious Greeley.[80] On the other hand, the Weed machine resolved to retain its domination in spite of the disaffection, and crush the *Tribune* editor at the first opportunity. Each side prepared for an impending contest, cognizant that the advent of a Republican National administration promised the distribution of a rich Federal patronage to the dominant faction at Albany.

If Greeley ever really coveted office, developments seemed to offer an opportunity to gratify his ambitions. In all probability Seward would be recognized by Lincoln with a Cabinet post or a foreign mission, thus precluding his reëlection to the Senate. Immediately following the presidential election, the *Tribune* mentor confided to friend Brockway that a Cabinet position offered no attraction, since his presence at Washington in that connection would only exasperate the "Fire Eaters," and anyway, he detested "official routine with great dull dinners"; but he "would like to go to the Senate." [81] The Anti-Weed

[79] Letter to Mrs. H. C. Ingersoll, July 5, 1860, Ingersoll MSS.

[80] *New York Herald*, July 3, 1860.

[81] Letter to B. Brockway, November 11, 1860, Greeley MSS. Beman Brockway was an old acquaintance and political associate, who first came into contact with Greeley in 1836 while the latter was still struggling along with the *New Yorker*. For a time, he edited the *Mayville* (N. Y.) *Sentinel*, and still later, the *Daily Palladium* at Oswego, finally serving for two years, 1853-55, on the *Tribune*

faction welcomed such a disposition on the part of their leader; the Senatorship was highly prized as a vantage point from which the Lincoln administration might be influenced and the patronage properly handled. With Seward out of the running, and the Weed machine considerably weakened, prospects were bright for placing Greeley in the coveted office.

The opposing factions mustered their forces and the battle raged throughout the winter of 1860-61 on two fronts — Albany, New York, and Springfield, Illinois. At Albany the immediate objective of the Anti-Weed group was control of the legislature, particularly the Speakership of the Assembly.[82] At Springfield, both Greeley and Weed visited Lincoln in the hope of enlisting his support. As the contest drew to a close the latter part of January, representations were made to the effect that the President-elect favored Greeley in preference to William M. Evarts, the Weed candidate; but Lincoln promptly repudiated such reports and announced a strict neutrality.[83] In the end, both sides claimed the victory. To be sure, the Anti-Weed forces did not succeed in sending their candidate to Washington, but the Al-

staff. In 1860, he purchased a third interest in the *New York Reformer*, a Republican organ published at Watertown. Although affiliated throughout the early part of his career with the anti-slavery wing of the Democratic party, Brockway enjoyed the confidence of the *Tribune* editor. Eventually, he joined the Anti-Weed group of New York Republicans and served as a close political associate of Greeley in the struggle with Weed and his up-state allies. See Beman Brockway, *Autobiography*, 16-44.

[82] B. Brockway to Greeley, November 17, 1860, Greeley MSS.

[83] Lincoln to Weed, February 4, 1861, *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, II, 324.

bany "Dictator" had been compelled to desert Evarts and throw his support to a third candidate in order to stave off defeat.[84] One-man power at Albany had suffered a mighty blow.[85]

As soon as Lincoln had taken up his abode at the White House, the two New York factions presented their claims to the New York patronage, thereby creating an embarrassing situation for the President, who desired to avoid any semblance of partisanship. Weed and Greeley journeyed to Washington repeatedly during March and by the end of the month most of the appointments had been made. The Seward-Weed ring succeeded in outdistancing their competitors in every branch of the service except the customhouse in spite of Lincoln's professed neutrality.[86] Greeley felt somewhat discouraged at the outcome,

[84] Brummer, 135. Brockway furnishes a brief account of the contest. He says: "It was a fight between those who regarded slavery as a social curse, and those who were willing that the institution should live if the Republicans could have charge of the federal government." See Beman Brockway, *Fifty Years of Journalism*, 242-246.

[85] After the defeat, Greeley was obviously much disappointed. He endeavored to console himself with the thought that, after all, his vote had been so large that the result was not mortifying. But he bemoaned the fact that his name had ever gone before the legislative caucus "seeing that success was hopeless from the start." Letter to B. Brockway, February 28, 1861, Greeley MSS. See also letter to Captain Strong, February 20, 1861, *Greeley Letters,* Library of Congress Transcripts.

[86] Brummer, 137. After discussing Cabinet appointments in a letter to Beman Brockway, Greeley said: "I tell you the chances are three to one against an honest man getting anything. The thieves hunt in gangs. . . Three quarters of the Post Offices will go into the hands of the conscriptionists. So with most offices. And but for our desperate fight, they would have taken the whole. But we are going to try to do something with the Customhouses." Letter to B. Brockway, March 12, 1861, Greeley MSS.

but he had succeeded at least partially in securing fitting rewards for worthy friends and supporters in the recent Senatorial contest, and all the offices had not fallen into the hands of the "thieves" and "conscriptionists." [87] Throughout the remainder of the year, it required constant alertness on the part of the Anti-Weed crew to keep "the old man" from putting through "a new deal" to secure all the spoils of war.[88]

The quarrel between Weed and Greeley did not confine itself to the Senatorial contest and distribution of the Federal patronage. A sharp personal antagonism arising with the Chicago convention, continued unabated throughout the Civil War. Greeley freely accused the Albany boss with corruption and dishonesty, and the latter replied in kind by terming his opponent "a fanatic, dazed, muddle-headed aspirant for office" who profited by illicit trade in southern cotton and intrigued with foreign representatives for a dishonorable peace.[89] Friends

[87] Letter to B. Brockway, March 19, 1861, and to Thoman B. Carroll, May 23, 1861, Greeley MSS.

[88] Greeley to Beman Brockway, November 17, 1861, Greeley MSS. The alertness and zeal with which Weed and Greeley struggled over appointments is shown by a letter from Lincoln to Chase with reference to a minor position in the Treasury Department for which a man by the name of Christopher Adams was being considered. "The great point in his favor," explained Lincoln, "is that Thurlow Weed and Horace Greeley join in recommending him. I suppose the like never happened before, and never will again. . ." Lincoln to Chase, May 8, 1861, *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works* (J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, eds.), II, 44.

[89] Kirkland, 64. Weed repeatedly charged the *Tribune* associates and correspondents with profiting through government contracts, as well as engaging in cotton speculations, directing his attacks

were involved in the charges and countercharges of fraud and corruption, and the whole affair produced an atmosphere of distrust and confusion far from conducive to the most efficient prosecution of the war.

The selection of a Cabinet to serve under the new Republican regime presented the extremely difficult problem of satisfying various elements in a heterogeneous political organization, each with its own peculiar traditions and antecedents. The choice of Seward as Secretary of State seemed reasonably certain long before Lincoln left Springfield, and it was generally conceded that Chase, Cameron, and Bates were receiving serious consideration. The *Tribune* had few comments to make on Cabinet possibilities. It hailed with great satisfaction the report that Chase had been proffered the Treasury portfolio and predicted his acceptance "by the whole country with unanimous approval." [90] Rumors of Cameron for either the Treasury or the War Department elicited poorly disguised disapproval. As for Seward, it spoke of the "ability, dignity, and tact" with which the New York Senator could be expected to conduct foreign relations.[91]

particularly against a certain Mr. Camp and alleging that the latter had confessed connection with Greeley in such enterprises. There is no evidence of any such collusion, but Camp appears to have been involved in the attempt by an S. Pancoast to engage in salt speculation by securing permits to pass the highly prized commodity across the lines. See *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series II, vol. II, 1534 ff.

[90] *Daily Tribune*, January 5, 1861.

[91] *Ibid.*, January 7, 1861.

In reality, Greeley had never desired Seward in the State Department, however. A fortnight after the election, he hoped to see Weed's colleague sent off on a foreign mission, and exulted in the firm conviction that he would not be offered a place in the Cabinet.[92] When time dissipated such expectations, he coöperated with Hamlin, the elder Blair, and others to secure for Chase a proffer of the Treasury Department in order that the latter might be in a position to offset Seward's influence.[93] When Seward and Weed utilized every available type of pressure to defeat the purpose of the Chase men, Greeley was thoroughly aroused. With Henry Winter Davis of Maryland, and perhaps another Southerner, looming up as likely Lincoln selections, he feared that Seward would control the Cabinet even though the Chase move succeeded. "Old Abe is honest as the sun, and . . . true and faithful," he confided to Brockway, "but he is in the web of very cunning spiders and cannot creep out if he would. Mrs. Abe is a Kentuckian and enjoys flattery. . ." [94] In spite of such dire predictions, however, the Greeley-Blair combination landed Montgomery Blair, Gideon Welles of Connecticut, Chase, and Edward Bates in their

[92] Letter to B. Brockway, November 17, 1860, Greeley MSS.

[93] H. B. Stanton, *Random Recollections,* 70. Chase wrote to Julian, a son-in-law of Joshua R. Giddings, January 16, 1861, that he did not care for a Cabinet position. Although he had canvassed the situation with Lincoln and would do whatever the latter considered best — stay in the Senate or go into the Cabinet — he hoped to remain in the Senate. S. P. Chase to George W. Julian, January 16, 1861. Miscellaneous MS.

[94] Letter to B. Brockway, February 28, 1861, Greeley MSS.

respective berths, thus assuring "four honest and capable men" at the side of the President.[95]

The objection to Seward in the administration was based partially on local and partially on national considerations. Greeley anticipated that the Anti-Weed clique would wage an uphill fight for the New York patronage with an influential opponent occupying the good graces of the chief executive. And such fears were well-founded, for the efficiency with which the Weed forces garnered the larger share of the spoils was attributable in no small measure to Seward's appointment. To be sure, Chase, with Welles coöperating, counteracted the influence of the Secretary of State to some extent, but after all, a representative of the state deserved first consideration in connection with the New York appointments.[96]

And then, in determining the policy of the new administration with respect to slavery and secession, Greeley had reason to believe that Seward would not fight up to the mark. Strangely enough, the two New Yorkers had shifted positions since the Chicago convention in so far as the terms "radical" or "conservative" were applicable to them. Greeley now classified as a radical since he stood adamant against any concessions to the South, while Seward manifested an inclination to concede most anything short of peaceable separation.[97]

[95] Letter to B. Brockway, March 12, 1861, Greeley MSS.
[96] McClure, 315; Gideon Welles, *Lincoln and Seward*, 71-73.
[97] *National Intelligencer*, January 14, 1861.

Those journals which urged compromise so vehemently during the early months of 1861 indicated a very kindly disposition toward Seward. The *New York Herald* averred that "If the Premier of Mr. Lincoln perseveres in the course which he has beyond peradventure determined on, he will make for himself the highest name in the history of the statesmen, patriots, and benefactors of the Republic." It referred to the Chicago Platform as "the fossil of a bygone time" and predicted optimistically that Seward would "reconstruct the Union." [98] The *New York Journal of Commerce* was ready to forgive the popular Republican leader for the past since an altered attitude promised to make amends for "a long course of fanaticism on the slavery question." [99] The *New York Times* commented in a similar strain, inferring that the Secretary of State would be the real head of the administration.

At first, the *Tribune* avoided turning Seward over into the hands of its enemies, and it spoke as assuringly as possible of his devotion to the Chicago Platform, but there were so many indications of an inclination toward conciliation and concession that the Greeley organ finally abandoned him. It resented the manner in which the new foreign secretary posed "as the center and soul of the incoming administration," [100] and condemned him severely for advice

[98] *Daily Tribune*, February 19, 1861, quotes the *New York Herald*.

[99] See *ibid.*, March 1, 1861.

[100] *Ibid.*, February 27, 1861.

alleged to have been proffered certain Illinoisans "to forget Freedom" and "save the Union." [101]

During March, with the exception of the strictures on Seward, the *Tribune* assumed a favorable attitude toward the administration. It commended the inaugural address for its conciseness and determined tone — an evidence that the government still lived "with a Man at the head of it." [102] The intention of the President to act cautiously, provoking no unnecessary hostility and yet evincing no weakness or hesitation, was gratifying.[103] Above all, the laws were to be obeyed and Federal property reclaimed and safeguarded; the South would yet realize "that peaceable dismissal is one thing, and that independent and arbitrary secession is quite another." [104] In case it should become necessary to evacuate Fort Sumter, as frequently predicted at Washington, the humiliation should not be accorded to any cowardice or negligence on the part of the Lincoln administration.[105]

In April, events rapidly converged toward a crisis. Public opinion formed rapidly in the North in support of more determined action in dealing with the

[101] *Ibid.*, March 8, 11, 1861. Moncure D. Conway records that Greeley once told him that while he felt no ill will towards Seward, he had no confidence in him as a minister. "Seward has and always must have a policy," said Greeley. "A policy is just what we don't want. We want manliness." *Autobiography, Memories, and Experiences of Moncure Daniel Conway*, I, 331.

[102] *Daily Tribune*, March 5, 1861.

[103] *Ibid.*, March 6, 1861.

[104] *Ibid.*, March 7, 1861.

[105] *Ibid.*, March 11, 16, 1861.

situation. The war fever began to grip some who at first felt comparatively indifferent toward Southern estrangement. As surely as the *Tribune* had aided in changing public sentiment, it had been influenced by that altered sentiment and moved along rapidly with the popular current. Although having expressed a willingness only a fortnight before to utilize two years, or even two, three, or four presidential terms, if necessary, in restoring the Union,[106] on April 3, it demanded: "Let this intolerable suspense and uncertainty cease! The Country, with scarcely a show of dissent, cries out — If we are to fight, so be it." [107]

The expedition against Fort Sumter momentarily quelled the characteristic Greeley impatience, and the *Tribune* again spoke in more friendly tones, commending the efficiency with which the Lincoln administration had transformed the government from disorganization and bankruptcy to a condition competent to face "a very formidable rebellion." [108] But the war spirit had seized upon the peace-loving editor, and in his eagerness to move instantly upon the South, Lincoln appeared to him to lag far behind. "Who shall deliver us from the body of this Old Abe?" he wailed to Brockway. "I don't feel like going through another four years of such government. . ." [109]

April 12, a Confederate battery opened fire on

[106] *Ibid.*, March 20, 1861.
[107] *Ibid.*, April 3, 1861.
[108] *Ibid.*, April 6, 8, 1861.
[109] Letter to B. Brockway, April 9, 1861, Greeley MSS.

Fort Sumter, and three days later the *Tribune* exclaimed triumphantly "Fort Sumter is lost, but Freedom is saved." [110] The last alternative had prevailed — the nation was at war!

[110] *Daily Tribune*, April 15, 1861.

Chapter III

A TRIAL AT ARMS

Firing on Fort Sumter greatly accentuated the rising martial spirit of the North. A people which four months before evinced considerable willingness to sanction peaceable secession, and would unquestionably have rendered an overwhelming verdict against war as an alternative of disunion had the issue been raised, now made ready to chastise the rebellious South. Peaceable disunion and compromise had been discarded as possible solutions of the national dilemma, and the nation stood committed to the ordeal of a trial at arms.[1]

The press clearly reflected the alteration in public sentiment. Comparatively few journals dared follow the lead of the *Albany Atlas and Argus* in denouncing the call of Lincoln for seventy-five thousand men as a "usurpation." [2] Some papers submitted grudgingly to the war sentiment which swept the free states, however. *The Journal of Commerce*, notorious for the tenacity with which it had clung to compromise and concession, indicated a willingness to "go as far in defending the Capital or any other part of the country" which desired to remain in the

[1] James F. Rhodes, *History of the United States,* III, 357-59.
[2] See the *New York World,* April 16, 1861.

Union "as President Lincoln, or any other man," but beyond that, it would only yield a reluctant acquiescence.[3] The persistency with which *The Independent* held to the doctrine of peaceable disunion after the *Tribune* and others had veered away, necessitated the negotiation of a sudden flop which threw the injudicious journal once more into the main current of public thinking, now bent determinedly upon war.[4]

Probably no paper experienced a more sudden and embarrassing conversion than the *Herald*. Editor Bennett had been enlisted in a personal controversy with Greeley and the *Tribune* for years. Strangely enough, the *Herald* supported Fremont during most of the 1856 canvass, and the two rival editors for a time met in friendly recognition. With the defeat of the Republicans, however, Bennett switched again to support of the Democracy and the Buchanan administration, loyally upholding the Lecompton Constitution and passing Douglas over "to the executioner." [5] Had his advice been accepted at Charleston and Baltimore, the Democrats would have patched up their internal feud and united with singleness of purpose upon the main objective of crushing the "Black Republicans." [6]

After the election, the *Herald* urged compromise,

[3] *New York Journal of Commerce*, April 20, 1861. The *Journal of Commerce* became so belligerent in its attitude that the Federal government finally denied its circulation in the mails on August 22, 1861. William H. Hallock, *Life of Gerard Hallock*, 156-7.

[4] *The* (New York) *Independent*, April 4, 11, 18, 1861.

[5] *Weekly Tribune*, May 8, 1858.

[6] *New York Herald*, November 1, 1860.

and denounced every suggestion of coercion to compel obedience to Federal law. On the very day that the news of Fort Sumter reached the ears of an aroused and determined North, a last minute appeal was issued to stem the tide of war.[7] In response, a crowd plainly bent on mischief formed in front of the *Herald* Office, and Bennett found it advisable to display a United States flag for the mollification of the impromptu gathering. The *Tribune* reported that "old Bennett," clearly misjudging public opinion, had provided himself in advance with the wrong colors, and hence, had been compelled to send out for a supply of the stars and stripes to meet the emergency.[8] Be that as it may, the *Herald* announced on the following day that the time for public peace meetings in the North had ended, and war would henceforth have the support of Northern Democrats, alienated from the South now by the "indiscriminate tone of hostility" on the part of the "Fire Eaters." [9] From then on, it professed to stand unreservedly for a vigorous prosecution of the war in order that the integrity and unity of the nation might be preserved, whatever the cost in blood and treasure.[10]

Greeley utilized the flag raising affair as a convenient means of launching repeated thrusts at Bennett, and throughout the war the two influential New York editors jabbed at each other with a ferocity

[7] *Ibid.*, April 15, 1861.
[8] *Daily Tribune*, April 18, 1861.
[9] *New York Herald*, April 16, 1861.
[10] *Ibid., April* 30, 1861.

and vindictiveness unequalled in the realm of personal controversy. The *Tribune* denounced "old Bennett," as an ally of traitors.[11] The *Herald* referred to "Massa Greeley," a denomination designed to cast derisive reflections upon his anti-slavery proclivities. It dismissed the *Tribune* version of the flag raising episode as a "silly fabrication," and countered with the ludicrous incident alleged to have occured in connection with the New York Senatorial contest, over which Greeley and Dana were supposed to have engaged in a violent quarrel which "shook the *Tribune* office from top to bottom" and created no end of amusement for a crowd of "excited Spectators" in the street below.[12]

The *Tribune* entered the war with great fervor and enthusiasm, keenly anticipating the rapid subjugation of the "traitors." It welcomed Lincoln's first call for troops and for a few days indicated no impatience with administration preparedness activities, believing that the South rather than the North, faced the necessity of speeding up war operations. But the impetuous and well-meaning Greeley, keenly responsive to the increasing war sentiment of the North, was not patient long. The *Tribune* soon demanded that the administration assure the people of an unequivocal determination to prosecute the war with the greatest possible rapidity and efficiency. "If good Uncle Abe wants to read the Secessionists another

[11] *Daily Tribune*, November 27, 1861.
[12] *New York Herald*, October 5, 1861; April 3, 1862.

essay proving that he never meant them any harm, or Gov. Seward has another oration to deliver to them on the glories and blessings of the Union, let the performances come off by all means," remarked the editor ironically, "but this will have to be before Jeff. Davis and Wise capture Washington. . ." [13]

The manner in which a small coterie of slaveholders forced secession upon an unwilling populace in North Carolina, and the refusal to submit the Confederate Constitution to a popular vote, all indicated "a rebellion of the Few against the Many" relying upon bullets instead of ballots, Northerners were told.[14] That rebellious minority should be met with their own weapons, and secession "crushed out in blood and fire if necessary," [15] for the North intended "not merely to defeat, but to conquer, to subjugate them." After the rebellious traitors had been "overwhelmed in the field, and scattered like leaves before an angry wind," they would find, instead of peaceful homes awaiting their return, only "poverty at their firesides" and "privation in the anxious eyes of mothers and the rags of children." [16]

When the administration acceded to the appeal of Governor Hicks of Maryland to cease sending troops to the Capital via Baltimore, the *Tribune* again turned loose a furious protest. "Let troops be poured down upon Baltimore," it thundered, "and if

[13] *Daily Tribune*, April 22, 1861.
[14] *Ibid.*, April 19, 1861.
[15] *Weekly Tribune*, May 4, 1861.
[16] *Daily Tribune*, May 1, 1861.

need be, raze it to the ground." Despite such insolent requests from the "snivelling, whiffling traitor" of a Governor, "the plug-ugliest State south of Mason and Dixon's line" could rest assured the North would "go through her and over her, in every direction, through every acre." [17] "The worn-out race of emasculated First Families" in both Maryland and Virginia would then yield "to a sturdier people," the pioneers of whom were already on their way to Washington "in regiments" and in due time would receive an allotment of Southern land as a fitting reward for service rendered in the cause of freedom.[18]

Such boisterous fulminations ran directly counter to the hope entertained by Lincoln that the border states might be sufficiently placated to retain their allegiance to the Union. But the optimistic fervor with which Greeley had launched into the crusade for the Union and freedom knew no bounds. Every border state should be occupied that had not immediately responded to the call to arms, the *Tribune* avowed, and the entire populace treated as traitors.[19] The war should be carried into Virginia without delay. Norfolk should be reduced, the southern counties invaded, and "proud, hypocritical, treacherous Richmond . . . the foul nest of Nullification and Treason," seized.[20] As soon as preparations were

[17] *Ibid.*, April 25, 1861.
[18] *Ibid.*, April 23, 1861.
[19] *Ibid.*, May 14, 1861.
[20] *Ibid.*, April 28, 1861.

complete, a couple hundred thousand men would march "right through (not around) Baltimore, Richmond, Raleigh, Charleston, Savannah, and Montgomery," join a similar force from the West, and celebrate Christmas in superb style at New Orleans. After "one or two considerable battles," the Federal government would accept "the unconditional submission of the traitors," dissolve the Montgomery government, retrieve stolen Federal property, and return the seceding states in obedience to the laws of the land.[21]

Throughout May and June, the *Tribune* continued to prod the administration on to greater activity, suggesting here and condemning there, in a tone often highly critical and antagonistic. Convinced that the people had grown "fifty years older" in the twenty days following Lincoln's first call to arms, it insisted that the administration should respond to a thoroughly aroused public opinion bent on vigorous military preparations.[22] "How much longer shall we wait? . . . How much more disgrace shall we suffer?" it wailed despairingly, "before the Government shall seem to begin to suspect that we are involved in a war where desperation of treason on one side is to be met by the desperation of loyalty on the other?" [23]

[21] *Ibid.*, May 1, 1861. The parentheses are Greeley's. The *Tribune* relied confidently on the power of the West to starve the South into submission by cutting off supplies which usually came down the Mississippi.

[22] *Ibid.*, May 2, 1861.

[23] *Ibid.*, April 26, 1861. Greeley avers in *The American Conflict*: "The precious early days of the conflict were surrendered

All kinds of suggestions and admonitions appeared in the *Tribune* columns concerning war preparations, ranging all the way from a warning against bright-colored scarfs and exposed red flannel as troop paraphernalia,[24] to complete diagrams and specifications for the construction of gunboats. The public was apprized that the Navy Department proposed to build fifty steam gunboats at an approximate cost of four million dollars constructed according to a plan which would render them unfit for action.[25] The merchants of New York City were urged to equip steamers with sufficient fighting traps to cope with lightly armed vessels bent on destroying Northern commerce.[26] And finally, to render it effective, the army required a great increase in cavalry and artillery units, an admonition repeated with dogged persistency throughout the entire early part of the war.[27]

The *Tribune* accepted the call in May for additional volunteers, along with the appointment of Fremont and Nathaniel Banks to responsible positions in the Army, as an indication that the govern-

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because the President did not even yet believe that any serious conflict would be had. He still clung to the delusion that forbearance, and patience, and moderation, and soft words would yet obviate all necessity for deadly strife. . . The wanton rout of that black day (Bull Run) cost the President but one night's sleep." See Horace Greeley, *The American Conflict*, I, 549; Horace Greeley, "Greeley's Estimate of Lincoln," *The Century*, New Series, XX, 377.

[24] *Daily Tribune*, May 12, 1861.

[25] *Ibid.*, June 17, 1861.

[26] *Ibid.*, April 30, 1861.

[27] *Ibid.*, May 12, 1861.

ment at last moved surely, even though slowly, in the right direction.[28] For a short time, customary impatience surrendered to glowing predictions of Union success. During the summer, Federal troops would doubtless confine themselves largely to fortifying and protecting Washington, conducting operations necessary to retain the allegiance of the border states, re-capturing Harper's Ferry, and seizing Norfolk and Richmond.[29] In the meantime, the volunteers might well be content to drill for greater efficiency; with autumn and cooler weather, the entire Union aggregation would swoop down and bring the traitorous brigands of Jeffdom to their knees before New Years.[30]

When events failed to justify such joyous anticipations, the old-time restiveness again returned to the Greeley establishment. The middle of June arrived and still no advance on Richmond. In the apartments of Fitz Henry Warren, a Greeley associate and just then the *Tribune* correspondent at Washington, there congregated various critics of the government including some Congressional radicals who distrusted the ability of General Scott to cope with the military situation. This group accepted the opinion of Warren — thoroughly acquiesced in by his chief at New York — that the war should be sharp and decisive, and adopted the motto: "On to Richmond." [31] Presently, there appeared at the top of the *Tribune* edi-

[28] *Ibid.*, May 30, 1861.
[29] *Ibid.*, May 27, 1861.
[30] *Ibid.*, May 28, 1861.
[31] L. D. Ingersoll, *The Life of Horace Greeley*, 394, 395.

torial columns, the caption in bold italics: "Forward to Richmond! Forward to Richmond! The Rebel Congress must not be allowed to meet there on the 20th of July! By that date the place must be held by the National Army!" [32]

One editorial after another scoffed at the delay and mismanagement of the Lincoln administration. Instead of overwhelming the Confederates by the magnitude and power of superior forces, the Lincoln government was allowing the contest to become "an equal one," destined to involve "skirmishes and sieges, and their alternating reverses and triumphs," rather than "a single short, sharp, but thorough and final collision." [33] The struggle had taken on the aspect of "a politician's war." [34] The inactivity of the Union Army enhanced the suspicion that those in charge of military operations still hoped for a "reconstruction." General Scott was thoroughly conversant with the science and technique of war, but "the real question" was whether he really wanted to rout the rebels or preferred "to have them concil-

[32] The "Nation's War Cry," as this was called, appeared in the *Tribune*, June 26 to July 6, 1861.

[33] *Daily Tribune*, June 19, 1861.

[34] *Ibid.*, June 27, 1861. With regard to rumors of compromise, the New York paper spoke bluntly. "The public have a right to know, in plain and distinct terms, whether any proposition for peace or compromise has been received by the President or Secretary of State from Jeff. Davis, and what the Administration are doing about it. They want plain English, and no diplomatic tricks." Lincoln's message to Congress a few days later reassured Greeley that the President still stood pat on the slavery issue, however, and all was well again from that standpoint. *Ibid.*, July 2, 6, 1861.

iated?" [35] If the authorities at Washington really wished to convince the public of their honesty and sincerity, they would "see to it that the National Flag Floats over Richmond before the 20th of July." Failure to whip the rebels by the first of January would be conclusive evidence that the Republic had been "betrayed by the folly or incompetence of its trusted leaders" and that disunion had become "a fixed fact." [36]

Doubtless the "Forward to Richmond" propaganda, disseminated in part by impatient editors and orators outside the *Tribune* Office, had some effect in speeding up preparations for a contemplated drive into Confederate territory.[37] At any rate, an eager and fretful North, inclined to discount the military prowess of the Southerners and ignorant of the enormity of the task confronting General Scott and his advisers, provided a willing recipient for such doctrine, and within a fortnight, a Northern army under General McDowell moved toward Richmond.[38] Then came the first encounter at Bull Run, in which unforeseen developments turned a well-planned battle into an utter rout, sending soldiers, civilians, and expectant Congressmen scurrying back

[35] *Ibid.*, June 28, July 1, 1861.

[36] *Ibid.*, June 27, July 7, 1861.

[37] *Memoir of Thurlow Weed* (Thurlow Weed Barnes, ed.), II, 336, 337.

[38] Benjamin F. Butler opines that the repetition of the "On to Richmond" slogan by the press exerted a great pressure upon the Cabinet, "to which they more or less reluctantly yielded." *Autobiography of Benjamin F. Butler*, 289.

behind the fortifications of Washington. Shocked and chagrined by the unexpected outcome of the first "considerable battle," a disappointed North obeyed a natural impulse to fix responsibility for the disaster ere rising again with a renewed determination to wipe out the sting of defeat and crush the Confederacy.

The *Tribune* saddled all blame upon the authorities at Washington for having allowed Union forces to be outmaneuvered and outnumbered, enquired what apology the government had to offer "the humiliated and astounded country," and demanded the immediate appointment of a new group of presidential advisers and army generals capable of understanding the exigencies of the crisis.[39] But the enemies of Greeley, making the most of a fickle public opinion, rose to the defense of the government and unloaded the blame at the door of the *Tribune* Office — the source of clamorous "On to Richmond" editorials alleged to have forced General Scott to acquiesce reluctantly in a movement destined from the start to end in a disastrous and humiliating defeat. Such an explanation gained a wide acceptance in the minds of a despondent public, and no one utilized it with more telling effect than Raymond of the *Times* and the vindictive Bennett of the *Herald,* the latter ever alert to point a telling jibe at the "ferocious Jacobins" of Spruce and Nassau Street.[40]

[39] *Daily Tribune,* July 23, 1861.
[40] *New York Herald,* July 24, 1861; *Daily Tribune,* July 24, 1861.

For Greeley, the failure at Manassas proved a bitter blow, and the veteran editor, cringing under the tide of popular disapproval and condemnation, dropped once more into the abyss of despair, convinced that his paper had been ruined and the Northern cause all but lost.[41] "All but insane," according to his own confession, he "resolved to bend to the storm" in a frantic endeavor to salvage what might remain of the wreckage.[42] In a famous article destined to incite an almost continuous round of comment from friends and foes, he disavowed any direct responsibility for the "Forward to Richmond" caption, and denied having written or consented to the publication of an attack upon the Cabinet. Henceforth, he promised, instead of serving the Republic by exposing the dangers which surrounded it, *Tribune* policy would be to sustain the hands of those charged with the duty of piloting the ship of state safely through the storm, now and then withholding some truth for a less troubled season in the hope that the most effective support might be rendered the government.[43]

As a matter of fact, the half-insane journalist experienced difficulty in extricating himself from an embarrassing situation without offense to the maxims

[41] A letter from B. Brockway to Greeley (no date) indicates the extent of the latter's discouragement which his friend endeavored to counteract. Greeley MSS.

[42] Letter to Moncure D. Conway, August 17, 1861. *Autobiography, Memories, and Experiences of Moncure Daniel Conway*, I, 336.

[43] The article alluded to, appeared in the *Daily Tribune* of July 25, 1861, and was entitled "Just Once."

of truth and justice. The notorious motto had undoubtedly originated with Warren and was repeated under the direct supervision of Charles Dana,[44] but the policy of the paper, involving a whole series of supporting editorials, received the tacit consent of Greeley, who later confessed that the offending headliner "counselled no movement which was not in strict accordance with the emphatic judgment of the responsible Editor." [45]

In accordance with the new resolution, the *Tribune* for a time displayed a more friendly attitude towards those in authority, despite the protests of many readers who regretted the exclusion of the customary fulminations.[46] It confessed that General Scott was right with regard to the advance on Richmond, and it termed him "the sheet-anchor of the Republic." "Let every thought of distrust be ban-

[44] James H. Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, 166.

[45] *Daily Tribune*, November 16, 1861. On March 27, 1862, Charles Dana, immediately responsible for publishing the "On to Richmond" motto, was notified by the stockholders of the *Tribune Association* that Greeley requested his dismissal from the editorial staff. Dana resigned and was appointed almost immediately by Stanton as Assistant Secretary of War. There is some question as to whether or not the Bull Run episode had anything to do with his exit. It appears likely, however, that Greeley and his associate agreed on all matters of general policy, and since, according to Greeley's own confession, the "On to Richmond" propaganda furnished no exception in that respect, publication of the material to which the editor-in-chief offered no protest, could hardly have been a cause for the dismissal. It is more likely that an antagonism of dispositions, apparent during Dana's entire sojourn with the *Tribune*, brought the two newspaper men to the parting of the ways. See Wilson, 169-171, Ingersoll, 399, and Don C. Seitz, *Life of Horace Greeley*, 207, 208 for various opinions.

[46] *Daily Tribune*, July 26, 1861.

ished," it advised, "while we rally around the glorious old Chief and save the Union." The *Times* received a stern rebuke for demanding the dismissal of certain members of the Cabinet, and in a spirit of revived optimism, the appeal went forth to forget the past, while all united in attempting "to work the good ship off the breakers." [47]

But poor Greeley succumbed to an attack of brain fever brought on by the distress and excitement of the Bull Run episode. Conscious of the rather bunglesome and not wholly consistent manner of bending to the storm, he believed the journal which had thus far exerted such tremendous influence in shaping the course of events, was broken down "*as a power*," with the nation hovering on the verge of ruin.[48] Friend Brockway mildly reproved him for not meeting the reverse with stoical indifference like the cool and philosophical Weed, but such invidious comparisons only added to his discomfiture, and for weeks of sleepless days and nights, vexatious thoughts of grievous mistakes and misfortunes passed back and forth through his nerve-racked brain.[49]

A week after Manassas, the disconsolate editor wrote Lincoln: "Can the rebels be beaten after all that has occurred, and in view of the actual state of feeling caused by our late awful disaster? If they

[47] *Ibid.*, July 27, 30, 1861.

[48] Letter to B. Brockway, August 14, 1861, Greeley MSS. Italics are Greeley's.

[49] *Ibid.*, see also, letter to Count Gurowski, September 25, 1861, Miscellaneous Greeley MS Collection.

can — and it is your business to ascertain and decide — write me that such is your judgment, so that I may know and do my duty. And if they can not be beaten — if our recent disaster is fatal — do not fear to sacrifice yourself to your country. . . If the Union is irrevocably gone, an armistice for thirty, sixty, ninety, one hundred and twenty days — better still for a year — ought at once be proposed. . . Send me word what to do. I will live till I can hear it, at all events. If it is best for the country and for mankind that we make peace with the rebels at once, and on their own terms do not shrink even from that." [50] Horace Greeley had sunk to the lowest depths of despondency, and in his discouragement, he reflected in some measure the extent to which the Bull Run disaster agitated the public mind of the North.

The *Tribune* labored in an optimistic refrain throughout the remainder of the summer, defending the policy of the administration, and encouraging the North to redoubled efforts in prosecuting the war. Having observed the gratifying operations of General McClellan in West Virginia,[51] it heartily endorsed his appointment as McDowell's successor, and pictured a changed atmosphere at Washington with troops rapidly pouring into the city eager to crush southern resistance under the leadership of the

[50] J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, IV, 365, 366.

[51] *Daily Tribune*, July 16, 1861.

talented "young Napoleon." [52] All factions were urged to obliterate party lines and forget political differences, in order that every patriot might rally to defense of the Union.[53] Obstreperous journals should cease their scurrilous attacks upon the administration, for the natural difficulties of initial war preparations had finally yielded to efficient organization.

But, by the middle of October, Greeley, now thoroughly recovered from his physical and mental depression, began to lose confidence in the trim young general with the high, shining boots and the dignified, commanding air. McClellan had a trained force of nearly one hundred forty thousand men encamped around Washington, and yet, after almost three months of patient waiting, no advance had been made toward Richmond. The *Tribune* warned that the nation was engaged in a life and death struggle, and if it should be clearly demonstrated that the North possessed inferior statesmen and generals whose replacement with more efficient leaders appeared impracticable, the only alternative was to acknowledge that inferiority and make peace with the Confederacy.[54]

Then occurred the incident at Ball's Bluff in which a couple of thousand Union troops were incautiously thrown across the Potomac, surrounded by the en-

[52] *Ibid.*, August 1, 1861.
[53] *Ibid.*, August 14, 1861.
[54] *Ibid.*, October 18, 1861.

emy, and half of them lost. Colonel Baker, a promising officer and Senator from California was killed in the encounter, and the incident added one more disgrace to a succession of disasters which had befallen Union arms since Fort Sumter. Greeley was again engulfed in impenetrable gloom. Six months had passed and the North was worse off than when the war began. Assistance rendered in securing the nomination and election of Abraham Lincoln had been the "greatest mistake of his life." Twenty million disunited people fighting on the outside of a circle could not overcome ten million, united and operating on the defensive! [55] Perhaps even yet, the South should be permitted to depart in peace.

At this point, there entered upon the scene, James R. Gilmore, a soldier of fortune who had spent considerable time in the South, and boasted first-hand knowledge concerning the curses of slavery. Desiring to convince Northerners of the necessity for emancipation, he sponsored a new magazine, designated the *Continental Monthly* and edited by Charles Godfrey Leland. In it there eventually appeared, alongside other specimens of anti-slavery propaganda, a series of articles entitled: *Among the Pines*, published under the pseudonym of "Edmund Kirke," but actually the handiwork of Gilmore. The contributions presented an over-wrought picture of conditions existing among the poor whites of the South, and they

[55] James R. Gilmore, *Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War*, 42, 46.

were designed to arouse in the North a universal hatred of slavery.[56]

In order to insure success to the new project, Gilmore enlisted the support of Robert Walker, former Governor of Kansas and now a confidant of the Lincoln regime. After the disastrous engagement at Ball's Bluff, the intrepid promoter disclosed the project to Greeley also, hoping to secure timely contributions from the inveterate foe of the slaveholding aristocracy. Failing to persuade Gilmore to discard the scheme and utilize the *Tribune* for dissemination of the emancipation propaganda, Greeley finally consented to write for the magazine. Before the interview terminated, however, he broached the possibility of securing for the *Tribune* through Walker, an advance line on administration policy. Shortly after, the *Tribune* dilated at some length upon the proper function of a great newspaper in time of war, insisting that the government should recognize the ability of the press "to serve the Republic by honest and fearless criticism rather than by indiscriminate laudation." [57]

Ere long, Gilmore and Walker agreed upon a plan for the *Continental*, whereby Greeley should be furnished just enough information of government policy to prevent him from "going off on tangents," in return for which, the *Tribune* would be expected to advertise the new magazine and place its columns

[56] The articles were later published in book form, netting the author over $13,000.

[57] *Daily Tribune*, November 20, 1861.

now and then at the service of the Ex-Governor. Lincoln recognized the extreme importance of toning down *Tribune* fulminations and approved the plan.[58] In order to inspire the confidence of Greeley, he wrote a letter, ostensibly to Walker, paying due respect to the *Tribune* editor for his tremendous power and influence, and promising to reveal fully the policy of the government — "its present views and future intentions when formed" — the information to be communicated by Walker, through Gilmore, to Greeley and held strictly confidential with respect to its source.[59] Gilmore again trekked to New York armed with the persuasive credential. When Greeley read its contents he beamed with delight, and the deal was consummated.[60]

[58] An incident alleged to have occurred during the war, if true, reveals the respect which the President entertained for the power of the press. According to the recollection of Chauncey M. Depew, Lincoln was asked at one time why he did not publish all the facts concerning an affair which had been distorted by the *Tribune* in such a way as to present the President in a false light before the country. Lincoln replied: "Yes, all the newspapers will publish my letter, and so will Greeley. The next day he will take a line and comment upon it, and he will keep it up, in that way, until, at the end of three weeks, I will be convicted out of my own mouth of all the things which he charges against me. No man, whether he be private citizen or president of the United States, can successfully carry on a controversy with a great newspaper, and escape destruction, unless he owns a newspaper, equally great, with a circulation in the same neighborhood." *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln by Distinguished Men of His Times* (A. T. Rice, ed.), 436.

[59] The letter was dated November 21, 1861, and can be found in *An Autobiography of Abraham Lincoln* (N. W. Stephenson, ed.), 264, 265; it bears out the main features and attending circumstances of the arrangement with Greeley as recorded by Gilmore in his "Recollections."

[60] Gilmore, 39 ff, 86-88. One must rely chiefly upon Gilmore for

For a time the arrangement promised to justify the expectations of its proponents. The *Tribune* refrained from attacking government policy; Greeley contributed to the *Continental*, and received a certain minimum of advice concerning contemplated moves at Washington. His informers hesitated to disclose anything of real significance, however, which led to dissatisfaction and a tendency to again become recalcitrant. Gilmore soon abandoned any serious attempt to keep the unruly ally in line, confining his end of the bargain merely to answering questions rather than volunteering information, and the *Tribune* soon turned back to the beaten path.[61]

information concerning this rather peculiar arrangement between Lincoln and Greeley. Gilmore claims to have compiled his "Recollections" from notes taken, either simultaneously with passing events, or shortly thereafter. With regard to the Lincoln-Greeley affair, he asserts that the original letters and memorandums involved in the transaction were available, and form the essential basis of his account. As already noted, the letter from Lincoln to Walker of November 21, 1861, substantiates his story, and the attitude of the *Tribune* during the late fall and winter of 1861 coincides, likewise, with the narrative. While one may well question the veracity of propagandists of the Gilmore type, capable of such distortions and exaggerations as appear in *Among the Pines*, the author of the "Recollections," appears to have rendered an account of the Lincoln-Greeley arrangement, reliable with respect to all its essential features.

[61] Gilmore, 81. Sidney H. Gay succeeded Dana as managing editor of the *Tribune* in April, 1862, and Gilmore seems to have relied chiefly upon transmitting occasional information from Walker to him, trusting that Gay, who had considerable influence in the *Tribune* Office, would be able to tone Greeley down. Gilmore's opinion that Gay "softened Greeley's wrath" on various occasions, coincides with the testimony of Henry Wilson and others that the managing editor kept his chief loyal to the Union from the spring of 1862 to the end of the war. Gilmore, 81-94.

It insisted that national finances were on the verge of collapse and the currency situation desperate.[62] The government failed to display energy and vigor which corresponded with "the devotion, the efforts, the sacrifices of the People." No official manifesto had been issued by the President depicting "the causelessness, the perfidy, the baseness, of this infernal rebellion," and "no electric word" had gone forth to arouse the masses to greater efforts. Instead the people appeared to push the government forward at every stage of the contest.[63] Aroused by a complaint that certain newspapers assumed to direct the operations of the government, the *Tribune* retorted "that if the chosen rulers of the country would only govern it, the journals would be content to record and approve." [64]

The impatience of Greeley with McClellan increased with every week that passed without any sign of offensive operations. A pronounced radical, keenly anticipating emancipation as the logical and desirable outcome of the war, he distrusted the pro-slavery inclinations of the Union commander, and the *Tribune* set about to secure his removal from the chief command. Although no charge of disloyalty was aimed directly at him, the public was constantly reminded of a military aristocracy, composed of "the regular or West Point element" in the Union service, which had displaced such able leaders as Fremont

[62] *Daily Tribune*, January 3, 1862.
[63] *Ibid.*, January 10, 1862.
[64] *Ibid.*, February 22, 1862.

and Sigel, thereby acquiring a practical monopoly of the conduct of the war — an aristocracy which appeared to be "far less anxious that the rebels should run than that their slaves should not." [65] The charge, repeatedly reiterated, that many high officers in the Federal Army did not intend that the Confederates should be "too severely whipped," pointed plainly enough to McClellan — the ranking officer in the West Point group, and the one upon whom rested the responsibility of initiating an offensive movement against Richmond.[66]

The *Tribune* welcomed the appointment of Edwin M. Stanton to head the War Department as an indication that Lincoln might possibly prove capable, even yet, of effectively dealing with the national crisis.[67] The new appointee knew "no politics but devotion to the Union," and the country could expect action from one who had earnestly urged "the striking of quick and heavy blows right at the heart of the abominable treason." [68] He would ferret out the pro-slavery military and naval officers — "the Washington correspondents and counsellors of the rebel generals across the Potomac" — and dispose of them in short order.[69]

When the first of February arrived and found the Union Armies still encamped about Washington in

[65] *Weekly Tribune*, January 18, 1862; *Daily Tribune*, April 10, 1862.
[66] *Daily Tribune*, January 13, 1862.
[67] *Ibid.*, February 3, 7, 1862.
[68] *Ibid.*, January 14, 1862.
[69] *Ibid.*, January 21, 1862.

spite of such optimistic predictions concerning Stanton, the *Tribune* commenced stressing the danger of foreign intervention. It pointed out the customary practice of nations, including the United States, to recognize in the course of time, an insurrection which promised to be successful. The war with the South caused more economic distress and inconvenience in England and France than in the North, and unless the rebels could be subdued by May or June, they would receive "that monarchical protection and help" which they had "sedulously courted from the start," thereby precluding all hope of a Union victory.[70] The occasion demanded instant and determined action on the part of every branch of the Federal government. Even Congress had contributed to the paralysis of the North by dawdling away with "two full months of words" while the nation was dying. No one should be elected to the next Congress ever known to have made a speech more than fifteen minutes long. The legislature should turn its attention from the construction of ships unavailable until June and the voting of war appropriations for the next fiscal year, as well as "everything else which implies that the struggle is to be prosecuted indefinitely," and concentrate upon the task immediately at hand.[71]

At the same time, the Greeley organ lost no opportunity to undermine public confidence in the

[70] *Ibid.*, February 5, 1862.
[71] *Ibid.*, February 6, 1862.

"young Napoleon," sedulously magnifying every rumor concerning curtailment of his authority as Commander-in-chief of the Union Armies, and finally virtually accusing him of hesitating to advance on Richmond upon reflection "that he would be likely to kill several thousand good voters" whose support might be needed when he ran for President in 1864 under the banner of the "Sham Democracy." [72] The bombardment continued well into April, until at last the *Tribune* confessed the uselessness of prolonging further discussion, since, in spite of a conviction on the part of Stanton, almost every member of the Congressional Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, and a large majority of both houses of Congress, that a change of command was desirable, the administration had definitely determined upon the favorite of pro-slavery interests to direct operations in Virginia.[73]

By April the long expected Union offensive got under way. Leaving his base at Fortress Monroe, McClellan cautiously advanced up the peninsula between the James and York Rivers with a force of approximately one hundred thousand. The Confederates, handicapped by inferior numbers, slowly

[72] *Ibid.*, February 22, 1862. Seizing upon this charge, the McClellan advocates maintained that the aversion of the *Tribune* to the General was dependent almost entirely upon a desire to "spike his guns" at an early date in view of his possibilities as a Democratic candidate for the Presidency. The *Tribune* replied that it had said less to shatter public confidence in McClellan than had been uttered against Secretary Welles, with whom it agreed in politics, and did not fear as a candidate in 1864.

[73] *Ibid.*, April 23, 1862.

retreated, so that by the middle of May, the Union pickets were in sight of Richmond. The Northern leader decided to settle down to siege operations, and in connection with various maneuvers on the part of Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson during June, let slip by an opportunity to seize the city, through his extreme cautiousness and inclination to greatly overestimate the strength of the enemy.[74] The engagements at Malvern Hill terminated on the first of July in a Union defeat only in the sense that Richmond still remained unmolested. But the confidence of the government in McClellan had been so undermined that Lincoln recalled him to Washington and transferred his army to the Potomac. The hesitancy and apparent inefficiency with which the campaign had been managed seemed to bear out oft repeated accusations of the *Tribune* concerning the Union commander, and thus the young general unwittingly played into the hands of that organ of public opinion which had desired his downfall.

The first impulse of the *Tribune*, however, was to censure the authorities at Washington for the dismal outcome of the enterprise. The salient feature of the Greeley military creed — adhered to with unfaltering persistency throughout the entire war — was the efficient utilization by the North of a decided numerical superiority. During the Peninsular campaign, the government was urged to reënforce McClellan so "largely and rapidly . . . as to paralyze

[74] J. C. Ropes, *The Story of the Civil War*, II, 167-169, 173, 174.

the energies of the Rebel masses by rendering further resistance hopeless." [75] But the administration failed to obey the admonition and again a Union army had been defeated by overwhelming numbers, according to the version of the *Tribune*.[76]

The pro-slavery journals, including the *Herald* and the *Evening Express*, likewise maintained that the campaign had failed through lack of reënforcements, but focused the blame on Stanton — long the particular object of their attacks — and "the Radical Majority in Congress." The advance on Richmond had scarcely begun, when the *Herald* professed to have knowledge of an eruption within the Cabinet in connection with the determination of the War Secretary and other "radicals" to interfere with McClellan's plans and refuse him reënforcements.[77] In view of the failure to take Richmond, it demanded the dismissal of Stanton, Welles, and Chase.[78] The *Tribune* rose to their defense, and a long drawn out controversy raged between the conservative and radical press, which later involved the military record of McClellan and, in the final analysis, amounted to a struggle between those who anticipated emancipation as the ultimate goal of the war, and those who would refrain from meddling in any manner with the institution of slavery as established in the seceding states.[79]

[75] *Daily Tribune*, June 10, 1862.
[76] *Ibid.*, July 4, 5, 1862.
[77] *New York Herald*, April 22, 1862.
[78] *Daily Tribune*, July 21, 1862.
[79] *Ibid.*, July 11, 21, September 13, 1862.

As a phase of the controversy, the *Tribune* continued the hue and cry during August for the replacement of army officers of a pro-slavery disposition by efficient leaders devoted wholeheartedly to the Union cause. It would not trust those who were so outspoken for "the Union as it was, the Constitution as it is, and the negroes as they are," of whom it would require as many to put down the rebellion "as of snowballs to boil a teakettle." [80] The country would be benefited if some would resign who objected so strenuously to "an abolition war"; in fact, the Bull Run disaster might have been prevented and the rebellion extinguished long since, had General Patterson, a pro-slavery sympathizer, resigned his commission before the commencement of hostilities, instead of playing the part of a drunken fool while the outcome of the first battle hung in the balance, the clamorous journal announced.[81] It protested against the retention of Patterson and other officers alleged to have performed in a similar fashion at Malvern Hill,[82] and it decreed as equally unexplicable the high commands held by men of comparatively inferior ability, while superior talent, such as Buell and Burnside had to be content with subordinate positions.[83]

While these condemnatory strictures fell upon Washington, General Halleck had been recalled

[80] *Ibid.*, August 6, 1862.
[81] *Ibid.*, August 13, 1862.
[82] *Ibid.*, August 21, 1862.
[83] *Ibid.*, August 15, 1862.

from the West and installed as Commander-in-chief of all the Union Armies. The various Federal units in the East were consolidated and placed under the command of General Pope. Learning something of the plans of Lee and Jackson to crush his army before reënforcements could arrive from the Peninsula, Pope retired behind the Rappahannock River, where McClellan's returning troops gradually collected in his ranks. Then, during the last days of August, completely outmaneuvered by his rivals, he suffered a crushing defeat in the Second Battle of Bull Run, and the Union Army headed again toward Washington.

Such a catastrophe, following close upon the failure at Richmond, and supplemented by a threatened invasion of Maryland, brought down upon the heads of the government a deluge of criticism. The *New York Evening Post*, a pronounced anti-slavery advocate edited by William Cullen Bryant, questioned the ability of the administration to win the war and welcomed the reappearance of the Democratic party, in the hope that its vigorous opposition might arouse Washington to measures which would save the country. The *New York World*, founded in 1860 as a highly moral and religious sheet and later merged with the *Courier and Enquirer*, concurred with the *Post*, and added that "the weak and inefficient administration at Washington" had "forfeited all right to complain of its loss of public confidence." [84] Even

[84] The *Post* is quoted in the *New York World*, September 12, 1862.

Raymond and the *Times* begged Lincoln to give the country "a responsible cabinet" and instruct it to formulate a policy "clear in its aims and distinct in principles." [85] Only the *National Intelligencer* was charitable enough to confess that, if the government had committed grave errors, the people were as much at fault as those directly responsible for the conduct of affairs.[86]

As for the *Tribune*, it had relinquished all hope "for any display of genius or decided military capacity" on the part of those in command; if the North won the war it would be only through the sheer force of numbers.[87] Lincoln was reminded in his own phraseology, of the "Augers that won't bore." [88] Had not Union losses been repeatedly sustained as the result of disloyal and inefficient leadership? "O, Mr. President! Mr. Secretary of War, Mr. Commander-in-Chief Halleck," it moaned, "here is a terrible responsibility resting on some one. . . How many officers whose sympathies are with the South have you today in important positions? How many whom you know to be drunkards are you allowing still to lead our heroes to sure destruction?" [89]

Less than a week after the disaster at Manassas, the advance forces of Lee, under Jackson, were

[85] *New York Times*, September 13, 1862.
[86] *National Intelligencer*, September 4, 1862.
[87] *Daily Tribune*, September 5, 1862.
[88] *Weekly Tribune*, September 13, 1862.
[89] *Ibid.*, September 20, 1862.

crossing the Potomac into Maryland. Another decisive victory, and that on Union territory, coupled with the successful operation of Kirby Smith and Bragg in Kentucky, the Confederate commander trusted would bring recognition from European powers and pave the way to a speedy victory. Foiled in an attempt to secure adequate supplies from Maryland sympathizers, it became necessary for Lee to open a line of communication through the Shenandoah Valley, and for that purpose he temporarily divided his forces, sending Jackson to capture Harper's Ferry.

In the meantime, the retreating army of Pope had been assigned to McClellan with orders to enter Maryland and follow Lee. While Jackson was still at Harper's Ferry, a lost dispatch fell into the hands of the Union General revealing Confederate plans, and McClellan proceeded to place himself between the forces of Lee and Jackson. Had he acted with a reasonable degree of vigor and initiative, half the enemy would have been at his mercy, but in consequence of the characteristic hesitation and delay, Jackson was well on his way to join Lee before the Battle of Antietam opened.[90] One of the bloodiest engagements of the war ended in a draw on September 17, and two days later Lee recrossed the Potomac unhindered by his unaggressive adversary.

The *Tribune* had optimistically assured the North that it was best for the rebels to invade Maryland,

[90] Ropes, II, 340, 344-56.

since they would be placed where the Unionists could "beat them to some purpose" — if indeed they could beat them at all.[91] After the retreat, it concluded that the enemy had outwitted McClellan in transferring artillery and supply trains across the river without loss, but for lack of data refused to say whether or not the Union forces were sufficiently strong to justify pursuit into Virginia.[92]

In the interval preceding the next major encounter, however, the *Tribune* continued to wield its cudgels against leaders with pro-slavery inclinations. Halleck had for sometime divided attention with McClellan as the chief object of condemnation. His order in November, 1861, barring fugitive slaves from all army camps, had precipitated an avalanche of criticism from Spruce and Nassau Street. The order was denounced as "a concession to slavery" sure to produce an exactly opposite effect from that which it was professed to effect; it indicated plainly enough that the author was "fishing for the good opinion of the rebel slaveholders." [93] After Antietam, Halleck received a warning that should the Grand Army be beaten again for want of reënforcements, the country would "hold him to a fearful responsibility," [94] and from then on, he was the victim of vindictive thrusts by the Greeley journal attacking his military record in the West and brand-

[91] *Daily Tribune*, September 9, 1862.
[92] *Ibid.*, September 30, 1862.
[93] *Ibid.*, November 23, 1861.
[94] *Ibid.*, October 20, 1862.

ing him "a Hunker Democrat of the most case-hardened Pro-Slavery type" — blows which were in no way assuaged by the alleged reference of Halleck to "a — Tribune, Abolition War!" [95]

As for McClellan, there could be no question about his conservatism. Shortly after the engagements at Malvern Hill, he had informed Lincoln that the war should not look to "the subjugation of the people in any state"; should involve no confiscation of property, or "the forcible abolition of slavery." [96] The *Tribune* attacked his military record from every available angle at every conceivable opportunity,[97] and persistently warned the public of his bad associates. The General was "petted and praised" by a pro-slavery cabal which had threatened from time to time to overthrow the government and set up a dictator; in fact, "every sycophant of the traitorous Slave Power in the loyal States, every sympathizer with the Rebels" saw fit to swear by him.[98]

At last, partly in response to the clamor of radical opinion, partly in consequence of the failure to

[95] *Ibid.*, December 15, 1863. Commenting on "General Halleck's Report," the *Tribune* said: "There is not a single disaster or failure for which the General-in-Chief seems to consider himself responsible; not one for which he is not able to account by the dereliction in duty of some subordinate commander." *Daily Tribune*, December 14, 1863.

[96] Letter to Lincoln, July 7, 1862, published in *Daily Tribune*, January 7, 1864.

[97] The *Tribune* disposed of McClellan's report issued in defense of his military record in the spring of 1863, as a compilation of "errors, suppressions, inconsistencies, misstatements and perversions." *Ibid.*, April 4, 1863.

[98] *Ibid.*, October 3, 1862.

utilize the advantage gained at Antietam, and for other reasons less clearly established, the administration removed McClellan from command, and the *Tribune* rejoiced that one more auger had been discarded which would not bore.[99]

Almost two years of warfare had taken its toll. More than "one or two considerable battles" had been fought. Northern patriots had not yet celebrated Christmas at New Orleans. And a war-scarred nation prepared for a further trial at arms.

[99] *Ibid.*, November 15, 1862.

Chapter IV

EMANCIPATION

The war had not been in progress long, until the question of abolishing slavery forced itself upon the attention of the North. The Republican party came into power recognizing the constitutional guarantees afforded slavery where it already existed under the sanction of state laws,[1] and in his Inaugural address, Lincoln endeavored to quiet Southern indignation at the triumph of "Black Republicanism" by reassuring the South that the peculiar institution would not suffer molestation by any act of his administration.[2]

Once the war had begun, however, a group of extreme Republicans combined with the ever persistent abolitionists in urging that measures be initiated in the direction of freedom. Personally, Lincoln felt the greatest antipathy toward the institution of slavery, and in the "House Divided" speech inferred that ultimately it would be extinguished from the land. But expediency required the consideration of other factors. Any suggestion of emancipation would be viewed with alarm most anywhere in the great Ohio Valley.

[1] The Republican platform of 1860 stated plainly that there should be no interference with the right of each state to order its own affairs; see *The Platform Textbook*, 61-63.

[2] J. D. Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, VI, 5.

The people north of the Ohio River were influenced by a pronounced detestation of free blacks, especially in so far as they entered into competition with free white labor. The population south of the river was composed in a large measure of slaveholders and those who sympathized with them or indirectly derived especial benefit from the slave system. The recognition of emancipation as a major issue of the war would be fairly certain to undermine the Northern cause in the Northwest and drive the border states into the arms of the secessionists. Furthermore, a large number of conservative Democrats in the East as well as the Northwest were willing to lay aside party considerations and coöperate with Republicans in prosecuting the war provided it were placed on the proper basis.

In view of all these circumstances, Lincoln judged correctly that Northern success depended upon holding in abeyance the one issue which threatened further disaffection, in order that all might rally around the common objective of preserving the Union. Eschewing any sympathy with radicalism, he proceeded on the simple assumption that secession was an impossibility; that the action of some states in renouncing allegiance to the Union impaired in no way their former status; and that it merely devolved upon the Federal government to compel obedience to the Constitution and the laws of the land. Congress accepted the view of the President and immediately after the First Battle of Manassas, passed

resolutions pledging the North to non-interference with slavery and avowing the sole intention of perpetuating the Union.[3] The appeal to nationalism proved immensely effective in counteracting the disintegrating forces within a North divided by the greatest diversity of economic and social interests. The administration program pleased the conservatives, quieted the fears of the border states, and, incidentally, precluded any move toward emancipation except in so far as it might be interpreted as a military exigency.

The views of Greeley on slavery were not greatly different from those of Lincoln. He detested the institution, had helped formulate that plank in the Republican platform which denounced its further spread over the territories, and anticipated ultimate emancipation as the only means of extirpating a national disgrace and putting forever at rest a troublesome and vexatious question. But he also recognized the demands of expediency which slightly modified his attitude toward immediate abolition and prevented collaboration with the most extreme wing of the radicals.

Shortly after the call to arms, the *Tribune* rejected the program of the extremists who would convert the contest into a war for the extinction of slavery, fearing the alienation of many Democrats pledged to the maintenance of the Union. On the other hand, it deprecated as equally untimely and

[3] *Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 1st Session, 222, 223, 265.

unreasonable, any pledge to the South that the existence of slavery would not be jeopardized as the result of a Northern victory. The ultimate status of slavery, it warned, would depend largely upon how the slaveholders conducted themselves. If they proved to be merely the dupes of political aspirants and indicated a readiness to overthrow the domination of disloyal demagogues, they would retain their favorite institution. But should they persist in the error of their ways, thereby protracting the war and threatening the life of the nation, all patriots, Democrat as well as Republican, would eventually respond with the decree that "The Republic must live, even though Slavery should have to die!" [4]

Between the lines of such a pronouncement it is not difficult to perceive a faint outline of the policy to which the *Tribune* was to adhere rather consistently during the emancipation controversy. Greeley realized the futility of advocating liberation of the slaves as a primary objective of the war. No permanent ground would be gained for freedom without a decisive Union victory — an extremely dubious result if abolition should drive a formidable wedge of dissension into a North already far from a unit in sentiment and purpose. Preservation of the Union, then, should be emphasized as the sole objective of the war. If the government would advance in the direction of emancipation as rapidly as public opinion could be educated to accept it as a war measure,

[4] *Daily Tribune*, May 14, 1861.

the editorial chief would be satisfied; for thus in time, there would be achieved indirectly that which otherwise appeared outside the range of possibility. Would the Government advance rapidly enough! — that was the question.

During the latter part of May, 1861, General Butler, then in command at Fortress Monroe, issued the first pronouncement concerning the status of slavery in so far as it related to war operations, by declaring that fugitive blacks formerly employed on Confederate fortifications were "contraband of war." [5] Northern opinion seemed to approve his course and the administration did not see fit to alter it. The *Tribune* heartily endorsed the procedure, concluding that surely enough "negro slaves, belonging to Secessionists and Rebels, are contraband commodities." [6] A little later, it spoke optimistically of the "good work of enlightenment" which would eventually permit a still more advanced stand in behalf of the negro without alienating War Democrats and other conservatives.[7]

Immediately following the first disaster at Manassas, the *Tribune* evinced such disappointment and impatience with the toleration accorded in official circles to the peculiar institution that it temporarily overstepped the criterion of military necessity and argued that peace would be no peace and treaties

[5] James F. Rhodes, *History of the United States*, III, 466.
[6] *Daily Tribune*, May 29, 1861.
[7] *Ibid.*, June 5, 1861.

misnomers if the status of slavery remained unchanged at the close of the war, since the free states would be guaranteed no protection from further southern inroads and all "the weary work of the last thirty years . . . with its agitations, excitements, mobs, lynchings" would be in vain.[8] But the Greeley organ refrained from repeating such extreme radicalism and soon turned back upon a more moderate course.

During August, Congress passed the First Confiscation Act, the fourth section of which gave freedom to all slaves employed on Confederate fortifications or contributing in any direct manner to military or naval operations.[9] The law accomplished little outside of placing the official stamp of approval on the earlier contention of General Butler, and the status of ordinary fugitives who poured into Union camps in large numbers still remained undetermined. Congress and the administration had not moved rapidly enough toward freedom to satisfy the *Tribune*, which again sounded a rather extreme note, strongly inferring that the time had arrived when slavery should die as "an insurgent and an outlaw" plotting to disrupt and overthrow the nation.[10]

Before the close of the month, General Fremont, in command of the Union forces in Missouri, decreed the confiscation of property of all those who

[8] *Ibid.*, July 31, 1861.

[9] Woodrow Wilson, *A History of the American People, Documentary Edition*, VII, 286.

[10] *Daily Tribune*, August 21, 1861.

had taken arms against the Union, and provided for the freeing of their slaves. Such drastic action naturally pleased the radicals but frightened the Unionists of Kentucky, a border state just then trembling in the balance. After a suggestion of modification had met with a cool reception at Fremont headquarters, Lincoln ordered that the audacious general change his order to conform with the First Confiscation Act.

Greeley had for some years been a staunch Fremont supporter. He refused to believe the charges of incompetency hurled at the radical idol, and to the very last defended his military record with all the earnestness and enthusiasm with which he had endeavored to besmirch that of McClellan. The *Tribune* maintained that the Fremont proclamation, while making no direct reference to the First Confiscation Act, proceeded on the principles set forth therein. "We do not understand the President as at all denying the soundness of the principles upon which General Fremont acted," it explained, "nor the authority of a commanding general to do in extreme cases precisely what he did, and when demanded by the imminence of the Crisis." [11]

This version of the Missouri incident was merely a lame effort to soften the rebuff which Fremont had met at the hands of Lincoln, and to minimize the

[11] "There is nothing in the history of the present position of the Administration which leads us to suppose that its modification of Gen. Fremont's proclamation is anything more than an indication of its policy toward Kentucky; perhaps its temporary policy there," commented the *Tribune* of October 19, 1861.

setback which the repudiation of his proclamation administered to the progress of emancipation; for as a matter of fact, the act of Congress and the Fremont order involved entirely different principles, and Lincoln had indicated no sympathy either with the principles or the methods utilized by the presumptuous general. A few days later the *Tribune* sought a small measure of consolation in the thought that the modified proclamation would at least have full effect during the interval of approximately ten days between its promulgation and subsequent modification. It branded the existing law as "a premium on insurrection" and a reward for aiding the enemy, since it offered emancipation only to those who took up arms against the Union or in some way aided the rebellion, and concluded that the Fremont method of dealing with the situation might be found "after all the wiser." [12]

Nevertheless, the *Tribune* would not "judge the government," but preferred "to follow and support it." Possibly the rebels would yet be conquered without decreeing the liberation of their slaves, but if not, and two or three more reverses were necessary "to educate the loyal mind of the country up to the decisive point," it would regret the necessity but humbly acquiesce.[13] A notification to Southern slaveholders that they would "be held legally negroless" unless the rebellion ceased within a specified time,

[12] *Daily Tribune*, September 18, 1861.
[13] *Ibid.*, October 2, 1861.

offered the most effective means of dealing with the conspiracy,[14] the *Tribune* insisted still later, but if the loyal, Union-loving masses of the North still remained unconvinced that slavery and treason were inseparable, it would continue to wait for a more convenient season.[15]

The action of Secretary Cameron during the latter part of October, ordering General Sherman to utilize fugitive slaves in any capacity deemed most useful to the service, was accepted at Spruce and Nassau Street as an encouraging indication of steady and unmistakable progress in the proper direction.[16] The annual report of the War Secretary assumed a still more advanced position by urging the use of fugitive slaves "for the defense of the Government, the prosecution of the war, and the suppression of the rebellion," the matter of arming them to be considered only in the light of military exigencies. Although the report had already gone out to some of the newspapers, Lincoln modified the pronouncement before submitting it with his annual message despite the protests of Cameron, and again the radicals complained.[17]

[14] *Ibid.*, October 14, 1861.

[15] *Ibid.*, October 17, 1861.

[16] *Ibid.*, October 29, 1861.

[17] *Ibid.*, December 4, 5, 1861. Kentucky was aroused at the attitude of Cameron, and demanded that the President oust him from the Cabinet. But the *Tribune* had no interest in making concessions as a matter of policy to a state which it alleged was "mainly rebel" and was presided over by a Governor "a traitor at heart." *Ibid.*, December 25, 1861.

The *Tribune* expressed keen disappointment at the modification. It hammered away at the government for some months, requesting, not that the negroes be invited to fight for the Union, "but that they be invited to cease aiding the Rebellion and supplied with a solid reason for so doing"; [18] pleading, not necessarily for an emancipation proclamation, but for a guarantee of freedom to those who would desert their masters and ally themselves with the Union cause.[19]

In every phase of the emancipation propaganda, whether the government was being urged to a more advanced position concerning the status of slavery, or public opinion was being aroused to the acceptance and espousal of partial or complete liberation of the slaves, *Tribune* readers faced the argument of military necessity in all its various ramifications. All "abstract considerations" were put aside. Others might set forth the undeniable facts concerning the wrongfulness of the accursed institution, but slavery "as an element of power" in the tremendous struggle which threatened the life of the nation merited first consideration.[20] In order to end the war for the Union speedily and triumphantly, the North should not hesitate to utilize the "readiest and most efficient means" at hand. If the President would see fit to

[18] *Ibid.*, May 1, 1862.

[19] *Ibid.*, May 12, 1862.

[20] *Ibid.*, May 1, 1862. The policy advocated by the opposition was "being defended on Political grounds alone," the people were informed. *Ibid.*, August 26, 1862.

advise the South that the Federal government would henceforth refuse to recognize slaveholding by rebels, the Union commanders would at once witness "a general stampede of slaves from all the districts within fifty miles of any Union force" directly to their camps.[21] And such an additional array of man power, if properly utilized, would prove of inestimable value to the Northern cause.

But the government could never hope to convert the negroes into enemies of their masters unless it treated them as friends, Lincoln was forewarned. As long as they were not recognized as allies of the North, the great mass of four million blacks, at the very best, would remain neutrals in the contest. At any time, the Confederate government, in desperation might appeal to them for assistance, thus converting slavery into "an element of positive and terrible strength" to the enemy.[22] An army of no less than six hundred thousand strong men accustomed to living upon a minimum of food, requiring little clothing, patient of hardship, and above all, "not likely to be over-sentimental about killing white folks," would thereby be placed at the disposal of the Richmond government by the simple promise of freedom

[21] *Ibid.*, December 16, 1861.

[22] *Ibid.*, October 19, 1861. "No act of Confiscation will bring present help to the Union cause," asserted the *Tribune*. "Confiscate a Rebel's plantation and it remains where it always was — doing you no good; emancipate his slaves, and they escape to our lines at the earliest moment, to render us such help as they may. Meantime, they cost as much in watching as they are worth." *Ibid.*, May 29, 1862.

which the North had thus far grudgingly withheld.[23]

The proper pronouncement from Washington would not only weaken the enemy by compelling the retention of half the armed rebels at home to patrol runaway negroes, but it would present the Northern cause before the eyes of the world as a struggle for universal freedom — the only adequate method of nullifying "the ill wishes of European despots and aristocrats." [24]

The controversy over emancipation became so acute and occupied such an important place in the public mind during the year 1862, that Northern leaders were oftentimes judged partially or exclusively by their attitude toward the all absorbing question of the day. After his removal by Lincoln for incompetency, Fremont still continued to fawn in the adulations of the radicals, who remembered his anti-slavery propensities and insisted that he be reinstated in an important command. According to conservatives of a pro-slavery hue, the military record of McClellan stood above reproach, the "second Napoleon" having fallen victim to a gigantic political conspiracy; while radicals endeavored to grind him to bits with repeated charges of inefficiency, incompetency, and disloyalty.

That the *Tribune* imbibed such prejudices is perfectly apparent. The attitude assumed towards Fremont, in contrast with McClellan and every other

[23] *Ibid.*, January 20, 1862.
[24] *Ibid.*, May 24, 1862.

general suspected of pro-slavery inclinations, needs no rehearsing. Secretary Cameron was not accepted for the war portfolio with any marked degree of enthusiasm, but when he stepped out in the direction of emancipation, thenceforth the *Tribune* vigorously defended him against all critics,[25] charitably overlooked alleged corruptions as the work of "unprofitable friends," [26] and praised the management of the War Department to the skies.[27] His successor met a similar generous reception, since he was expected to purge the Army of pro-slavery leadership and fall in line with the radical program. Stanton played a prominent role in the McClellan controversy, and in the lively exchange of uncomplimentary epithets, often needed, and could always rely upon, the stout defense and unmitigated commendation of the most influential journal in the country.[28] Secretary Chase, the leading representative of radicalism in the Lincoln Cabinet and one who fought up to the mark on emancipation,[29] experienced not a single unfavorable criticism from the *Tribune*, while column after column defended his financial measures and in general sang his praises throughout the entire period of the American conflict.[30]

[25] *Ibid.*, November 30, 1861.

[26] *Ibid.*, January 14, 1862.

[27] *Ibid.*, November 5, 1861.

[28] *Ibid.*, February 18, May 6, 1862.

[29] See letter of Chase to Greeley on the nullification of Hunter's proclamation, Alonzo Rothschild, *Lincoln, Master of Men*, 179.

[30] For typical references see *Daily Tribune*, November 16, 1861; June 12, 1862; December 11, 1863.

As the war progressed, public opinion in the North shifted gradually in the direction of emancipation. Lincoln sensed the trend of events. He favored the abolition of slavery provided it could be accomplished in the proper way. Furthermore, to convert the conflict into a struggle for freedom as well as for preservation of the Union, promised to elicit a favorable response in Europe and perhaps forestall recognition of the Confederacy. March 6, 1862, in a special message to Congress, the President proposed a plan of emancipation with compensation calling for the payment of four hundred dollars to owners of negroes in the loyal slave states for each slave freed.[31]

Although distinctly opposing any further concessions to the border states, the *Tribune* welcomed the proposition as an evidence that the government had at last headed in the right direction, and it predicted that the sixth of March would yet be celebrated "as a day which initiated the Nation's deliverance from the most stupendous wrong, curse and shame of the Nineteenth Century." [32] It interpreted the move as an indication that the President realized rebellion could not be permanently suppressed in the South as long as slavery existed, and thanked God that the country had "so wise a ruler." [33]

[31] The *Times* opposed the plan of emancipation with compensation on the basis of excessive cost. For Lincoln's correspondence with Raymond on that point, see *Selections from Abraham Lincoln* (A. S. Draper, ed.), 109, 110.

[32] *Daily Tribune*, March 7, 1862.

[33] *Ibid.*, March 8, 1862.

Representatives in Congress from the states affected by Lincoln's proposal did not take so kindly to the measure, however. They professed to have gained the notion that the plan virtually threatened compulsory emancipation as the only alternative of its rejection. In order to clear up the misunderstanding and present the proposition in its true light, Lincoln held a conference with several border state men. He discovered that the erroneous impression, whether genuine or feigned, originated in the columns of the *Tribune,* which had held out but slight hope for acceptance of compensated emancipation by those immediately concerned and yet inferred strongly that the President had determined upon the complete abolition of slavery as a necessary adjunct of permanent peace.[34] Upon receiving the assurance of the President that no thought of compulsory emancipation was involved, the border state representatives requested that the fact be published, but Lincoln refused on the ground that such procedure would force him into a quarrel with the "Greeley faction" and the *Tribune* — a quarrel which he did not care to encounter "before the proper time" and would avoid altogether if possible.[35] In the end, emancipation with compensation met with little favor either in Congress or among the people of the states concerned, and the matter was dropped.

[34] See the preceding reference.

[35] Taken from a memorandum of J. W. Crisfield, a border state Congressman, *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works* (J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, eds.), II, 135.

During the first part of May, the Union commander in South Carolina, General Hunter, acting on his own initiative but with the approval of Chase and other radicals, issued a proclamation declaring all the slaves free in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida on the ground that slavery and martial law were incompatible. The *Tribune* hailed the order as "a great fact" pointing "the way to unity and victory,"[36] only to be apprized a few days later that the decree had been reversed. Once more the disappointed journal consented to bow to the decision of the President, consoling itself with the general tone of Lincoln's proclamation superseding the rescinded order, which it interpreted as clearly establishing the power of the military to utilize emancipation as a war measure. "No doubt," it concluded hopefully, "the single question was, though not avowed, whether the time for exercising that power had arrived, and whether, when exercised, it could not be more appropriately done by the Commander-in-chief, the President himself." [37] In the meantime, it would be patient and trust the cause of liberation to further enlightenment of public opinion. Once the loyal people of the North were fully convinced that slavery would have to succumb in order that the nation might live, the government would "not be found impeding the course dictated by National integrity and safety." [38]

[36] *Daily Tribune*, May 16, 1862.
[37] *Ibid.*, May 20, 29, 1862.
[38] *Ibid.*, May 29, June 16, 1862.

During July, Congress dealt once more with the disturbing slavery issue by passing the Second Confiscation Act, granting freedom to the slaves of all persons resisting the Union wherever such blacks came under the cognizance of the military arm of the government. It also authorized the President to employ as many negroes as he deemed necessary to suppress the rebellion in any capacity most likely to promote the public welfare.[39] Lincoln considered the law of doubtful constitutionality, and he hesitated to utilize its most drastic provisions, especially with respect to arming blacks for military purposes.

The act met all the requirements of the Greeley program as related to the factor of military necessity, but the *Tribune* predicted at once "a faithless, insincere, higgling, grudging execution" of the "most righteous and vital measure." [40] A war bulletin issued within a few days directing the Union commanders in disloyal territory to employ negroes as laborers, with no reference to their being freed, seemed to indicate that the administration contemplated the execution of the Confiscation Act with indifference, and the *Tribune* immediately launched upon a vigorous campaign designed to compel Lincoln to fight up to the advanced position marked out by Congress.[41]

[39] *United States Statutes at Large*, XII, 591, 592, sections 9, and 11 of the Confiscation Act of July 17, 1862.

[40] *Daily Tribune*, July 19, 1862.

[41] *Ibid.*, July 23, 1862. The *Tribune* had expressed the same concern with respect to an act of Congress of the preceding March

It demanded that the President issue "a brief, frank, stirring Proclamation recognizing the Confiscation-Emancipation Act as the law of the land, and the basis of the new war policy resolved on by the Nation," and explicitly instructing every military and naval commander to rigorously enforce its provisions.[42] The simple fact that half the Army officers were "notoriously in more or less sympathy" with the rebellion and were anxious to have the war "so delicately prosecuted" that slavery would suffer the least possible disturbance, rendered an official promulgation of the law especially necessary.[43] "Mr. President!", the Greeley organ cried, "favor the citizens so soon to be transformed by your call into soldiers with an edifying example of perfect obedience to law." [44]

Meanwhile, Lincoln had determined upon a tentative emancipation proclamation applicable to the seceding states, which he presented to the Cabinet on July 22. Although considered more or less favorably by every one with the possible exception of Blair, the suggestion of Seward prevailed that its announcement in the face of repeated Northern reverses would be quite generally interpreted as a sign of

forbidding the rendition of slaves by any one in the Military or Naval service of the government, alleging that many officers were systematically defying it because it had not been officially proclaimed and specific orders issued concerning obedience to its provisions. *Ibid.*, April 19, 1862.

[42] *Ibid.*, July 25, 1862.

[43] *Ibid.*, July 28, 1862.

[44] *Ibid.*, August 5, 1862; see also, letter to Mrs. R. M. Whipple, August 6, 1862, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

weakness.[45] Consequently the momentous document was temporarily pigeon-holed to await a more convenient season.

But these proceedings were not known outside official and semi-official circles. When weeks passed without any response from the White House to the *Tribune* appeals relative to the confiscation measure, the patience of Greeley approached the breaking point. Convinced that a majority of the people favored his contention, he resolved to focus the entire weight of public opinion upon the unyielding Lincoln through the medium of an open letter addressed to the President setting forth the alleged hopes and desires of the loyal masses in the North. According to Gilmore, advance rumors of the appeal reached the White House, and a conference ensued between Lincoln, Walker, and Gilmore, in which it was finally decided to head off the movement by furnishing the exasperated Greeley some information concerning the waiting emancipation proclamation. But the effort was tardy, for the next morning there appeared in the *Tribune* columns the famous "Prayer of Twenty Millions." [46]

The appeal was not primarily for an emancipation proclamation. To be sure, the letter expressed an opinion that the President might have dealt the rebellion a staggering blow in its infancy by holding

[45] Gideon Welles, *Lincoln and Seward*, 211, 212; *Seward at Washington, 1861-1872* (F. W. Seward, ed.), 118.

[46] James R. Gilmore, *Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War*, 75, 76.

out the threat of emancipation in his Inaugural address, but the burden of the "prayer" concerned an ungrudging execution of the laws — especially the recently enacted confiscation measure — by "publicly and decisively" instructing all subordinates that such laws existed and were "to be obeyed to the letter." [47]

Replying similarly, in a public dispatch, the versatile President judiciously avoided the law enforcement issue and announced a policy involving the sole objective of saving the Union, relative to which all other issues — including the status of slavery — would be subordinated and considered only with reference to their utility in achieving the ultimate goal.[48] The pronouncement was widely read, and the simple, direct manner of presenting the issue exerted a great influence on the public mind. The *Tribune* countered with the familiar charge of failure to execute the laws, but to little purpose.[49] The complaint voiced later that Lincoln had side-stepped the problem immediately at hand and merely used the "Prayer" as an excuse for expounding public policy, was doubtless not far from the truth, but not so apparent to the

[47] *Daily Tribune*, August 20, 1862. The *Times* did not consider it very modest of its neighbor to issue the "Prayer" in the name of "twenty millions of people," averring that "it was a bold assumption to claim to represent the view of so vast a constituency." "The President, not yet seeing the propriety of abdicating in behalf of our neighbor, consoles him with a letter that assures the country of abundant sanity in the White House," it commented. *New York Times*, August 25, 1862.

[48] *Daily Tribune*, August 25, 1862.

[49] *The Rebellion Record* (Frank Moore, ed.), XII, 482, 483.

average Northerner.[50] The impatient radicals had been temporarily thrust aside and the administration permitted to continue on its way.

The march of events allotted but a short time longer for the conservatives to swear by Lincoln, however. Before the end of August, Secretary Seward, long identified in the public mind as the arch-enemy of emancipation, pointed to liberation of the slaves as a justifiable final resort in dealing with the possibilities of foreign intervention.[51] Then came Lee's invasion of Maryland and the repulse at Antietam. The Emancipation Proclamation emerged from its temporary retreat and was announced to the world. It not only decreed freedom for slaves in all states resisting the Union on January 1, 1863, but it specifically cited those sections of the Second Confiscation Act dealing with slavery and ordered all persons engaged in the military and naval service to observe, obey, and enforce their provisions.[52]

The instantaneous reaction of the press reflected the admixture of exultation and dismay with which the country greeted the new policy of the govern-

[50] Horace Greeley, "Greeley's Estimate of Lincoln," *The Century*, vol. XX, New Series, 379, 380. According to Gilmore, immediately after the "prayer of Twenty Millions" had appeared, he informed Greeley that the Emancipation Proclamation was ready and only awaited an opportune time to make it public. The latter was much gratified, but then came Lincoln's reply to the "Prayer," and Greeley thought that he had been double-crossed.

[51] In a published dispatch to Charles Francis Adams, *Daily Tribune*, August 29, 1862.

[52] Horace Greeley, *The American Conflict*, II, 253; *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works*, II, 237, 238.

ment. The *Evening Post* and *The* (New York) *Independent* rejoiced at the consummation of a program so long advocated in their columns.[53] The *Times* expressed the sentiment of mildly conservative Republicans by defending the measure on the basis of indisputable necessity.[54] The *Evening Express* condemned the Proclamation in the severest terms, complaining bitterly that Lincoln had at last surrendered to the foul abolitionist fanatics of New England plainly bent upon ruining the nation.[55] The *Herald* labored in a similar strain, censuring the President for capitulating to the radicals, and the radicals for having forced the diabolical measure on the country.[56] But after all, it averred, Lincoln had recently informed an anti-slavery delegation from Chicago that emancipation could not be enforced; the Proclamation was doubtless intended only as a sop to the abolitionists.[57]

The *Intelligencer* expected neither good nor harm from the act of liberation, for had not Wendell Phillips only a fortnight before predicted that such a measure would be utterly void with a McClellan in the field, and a Seward or a Blair in the Cabinet, involved in its execution? The Washington organ sought consolation with the *Herald* in the belief

[53] *New York Evening Post*, September 24, 1862; *The Independent*, September 25, 1862.

[54] *New York Times*, September 23, 1862.

[55] *New York Evening Express*, September 24, 1862.

[56] *New York Herald*, September 23, 1862.

[57] *Ibid.*, September 27, 1862.

that Lincoln merely tried to appease the radicals by demonstrating the utter futility of the course they urged.[58] Most belligerent of all, the *World* insisted that the President had "swung loose from the constitutional moorings of his inaugural address" and was "fully adrift on the current of radical fanaticism"; coerced by the insanity of desperate abolitionists, he had resigned to a proclamation which violated the Constitution and ran counter "to the general current of civilization in the conduct of war." [59]

But, for Horace Greeley, the Emancipation Proclamation marked the consummation of a long and bitter fight and opened up the vistas of a new day. The *Tribune* announced "the beginning of the end of the rebellion; the beginning of the new life of the nation," and exclaimed, "GOD BLESS ABRAHAM LINCOLN!" [60]

[58] *National Intelligencer*, September 23, 24, 1862.

[59] *New York World*, September 24, 1862.

[60] *Daily Tribune*, September 23, 1862; letter to James Graham, October 11, 1862, Greeley MSS. A phase of emancipation sponsored by Lincoln, did not meet with the approval of Greeley. Lincoln had suggested to Congress early in the spring of 1862 that the blacks should be colonized in Africa, and at that time the *Tribune* commented that it would be more appropriate to colonize the Southerners inasmuch as they were so anxious to civilize the Africans. Provision was made for exportation and colonization in the Second Confiscation Act of July 17, 1862, and Congress appropriated $150,000 to carry out such a project. The *Tribune* continued to oppose the plan and was much gratified when it appeared to have "kicked its last." *Daily Tribune*, December 2, 1862; *Weekly Tribune*, March 26, 1864.

Chapter V

FROM FREDERICKSBURG TO PETERSBURG

Perhaps the most difficult problem confronting the Lincoln administration throughout the entire war was that of harmonizing sectional interests and preserving unity throughout the North in the face of discouraging reverses and long delays of inactivity in military operations. Thanks to the tactful procedure of the President, the crisis passed safely in the border states during the first year of the struggle, and with a generous supply of Federal troops always on hand to speak effectively against secession, the Unionists had their way throughout the war.

But the region north of the Ohio River, and the East — particularly New England — represented the most divergent economic and social interests and ideals. The East presented the strange combination of aristocracy and radicalism; the West, democracy and conservatism; although to be sure, there were centers of radicalism and conservatism in both East and West. To formulate a program which would satisfy such divergent interests and hold the Northwest to the East, presented a dilemma which sorely tried the patience and skill of the perplexed Presi-

dent and forever threatened to disrupt a nation already in the throes of a life and death struggle.

A serious attitude of dissatisfaction and disaffection began to spread through the Northwest during the second year of the war, the seriousness of which was demonstrated in the fall elections of 1862. There were doubtless many contributing causes, disappointment at military failures constituting an important factor. The Northern people had been assured by many well-meaning enthusiasts that the the South would succumb after one or two sharp engagements. But McClellan had failed to take Richmond, and Pope had met the disastrous fate of McDowell at Manassas. To be sure, Lee had been forced back out of Maryland after Antietam and Grant had operated successfully from Fort Henry to Corinth, but both campaigns had been followed by exasperating periods of delay and inactivity. When, after more than a year of bloodshed and sacrifice, the Confederacy had not been crushed, gloom and despair hung heavy over the entire North, and Democrats of a Copperhead hue freely pronounced the war a failure.

But the most fruitful source of irritation in the Northwest was the Emancipation Proclamation. Like all regions bordering on a slaveholding section, the area immediately north of the Ohio contained many pro-slavery sympathizers, extremely antagonistic towards New England abolitionists and any measure dictated by Northern radicalism, whether

originating in the West, Northern New York, or in the Western Reserve district of Ohio. Furthermore, the Northwest was composed for the most part of small farmers, naturally conservative by instinct and characterized by a distinct aversion to free blacks.[1] With emancipation proffered to the slaves as a bid for renouncing their Southern masters, they viewed with alarm the prospect of an avalanche of blacks sweeping northward, entering into competition with free labor, complicating the social system, and providing endless sources of irritation and disturbance.

In fact, fugitive blacks had already reached the southern border of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio in considerable numbers by the fall of 1862 as a result of the Second Confiscation Act, and that indicated all too plainly what the future held in store. As a general rule, they met a cool reception. Labor was needed on the farms to replace the toll of enlistments, but many farmers preferred to let their fields lie fallow rather than depend upon negroes.[2] Barred from the Army, and with little or no means of subsistence, the freed slaves presented a serious problem in many western localities, and they stirred up decided antagonism toward those responsible for the Emancipation Proclamation, a measure which promised still further complications and irritations.[3]

[1] Elbert J. Benton, *The Movement for Peace Without a Victory During the Civil War* (Western Historical Society Publications No. 99), 11.

[2] *Daily Tribune*, October 17, 1862.

[3] Professor Cole has an excellent chapter on the race factor in

The fall elections witnessed a decided reaction to Republican rule. Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin registered the sentiment of the Northwest by choosing anti-administration state officials, while New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey followed suit in the East. Chase and other prominent radicals were anxious to preserve the large Republican majority in Congress, but their influence failed to stem the tide of Democratic accessions, and over thirty members of the House slipped over into the opposition column.[4]

Greeley watched the trend of events with dismay, while the *Tribune* endeavored to revive the drooping spirits of its co-laborers with far more optimism than the situation justified. On the eve of the election, it predicted that the Union state ticket in New York would win by "a handsome majority" despite the customary buncombe of the opposition,[5] but the unwelcome returns forced the admission that the enemy had carried everything by at least a fifteen thousand majority.[6] The conservative journals, which had fought emancipation so valiantly, made the most of the verdict by interpreting it, either as a

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the Northwest during 1862-63; see Arthur C. Cole, *The Era of the Civil War*, The Centennial History of Illinois, III, Chapter XV. The people of Illinois endorsed constitutional provisions prohibiting negroes and mulattoes from settling in the state or voting, by overwhelming majorities in June, 1862.

[4] A. B. Hart, *Salmon Portland Chase*, 308, 309; *Daily Tribune*, October 20, 1862.

[5] *Daily Tribune*, November 4, 1862.

[6] *Ibid.*, November 6, 1862.

withdrawal of public confidence in the administration, or an expression of dissatisfaction with the policy to be inaugurated January first. The *Tribune* admitted that the first version was partially true and could be readily corrected if the government would only appear "terribly in earnest" about the war.[7] But it emphatically denied that one solitary vote had been turned out of the Union column through a reaction to the Emancipation Proclamation. Instead, failure to acquire a majority for the administration ticket in certain states resulted largely from the fact that seven hundred thousand Republicans were enlisted in the Union service and were unable to vote, in comparison with only two hundred thousand Democrats.[8]

Instead of withdrawing confidence from the administration, Greeley constituents were told the Emancipation Proclamation promised a speedy, overwhelming victory for Northern arms. For a year and a half, the war had been conducted under the auspices of border state policy and pro-slavery generals, without any material advance in suppressing

[7] *Ibid.*, October 22, 1862.

[8] *Ibid.*, November 25, December 6, 1862. The *Herald* discussed rumors from Washington to the effect that Lincoln regarded the fall elections as a repudiation of the emancipation policy and wanted to rescind the Proclamation, being encouraged in that desire by Seward, Smith, and Blair. He was restrained from doing so, however, by Chase, backed up by threats that Congressmen Fessenden, Sumner, Wade, Wilson, Stevens, Lovejoy, Conkling, and others, would block appropriations and stop the war in that contingency, so the reports stated. *New York Herald*, November 17, 1862.

the rebellion. But, from three to six months of the emancipation policy would "bring the traitors to their marrow-bones." If not, the *Tribune* would own it a failure and urge the government "to make the best attainable peace." [9]

But, notwithstanding such display of unbridled optimism, Greeley was terribly discouraged. Despite the constant refrain concerning absentee soldiers spoiling Unionist chances at the polls, he realized that the people had repudiated emancipation in the fall elections.[10] His enemies had profited greatly by the rather sudden turn of events and made the most of his discomfiture. "Whether the *Tribune* will or will not live through this strugle, I do not know," he wrote a friend. "I rather guess it will though the clamour against it is now fearful, and we have, of course, lost many subscribers. . ." [11]

With the removal of McClellan early in November, General Burnside assumed command of the Union forces, understanding full well that the country expected a move on Richmond. He hoped to elude Lee, cross the Rappahannock, and gain the heights beyond before the Confederates arrived. But a delay in securing pontoons spoiled plans sufficiently that the enemy secured the high ground be-

[9] *Daily Tribune*, December 6, 1862.

[10] Letter to a Vermonter, (name illegible) November 6, 1863, Greeley MSS.; James R. Gilmore, *Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War*, 90.

[11] Letter to Mrs. H. C. Ingersoll, November 26, 1862, Ingersoll MSS.

fore Burnside moved across the river, and consequently they held an extremely advantageous position in the battle which ensued. Two days later, on December 15, the Union Army, badly beaten and disheartened, withdrew to the north bank.[12]

While these maneuvers were in progress, the *Tribune* praised the honesty of purpose, the military skill, and "the high qualities of mind and heart" of McClellan's successor. Adhering to the standard Greeley formula for the successful conduct of all campaigns, it advised the government to strip Washington and Maryland bare of troops, and if necessary evacuate Williamsburg, Yorktown, and Norfolk, in order that the last regiment might be hurried to the support of Burnside and the cohorts of treason hurled into the last ditch.[13] Then came the stunning news of another Union defeat, and the mantle of gloom which had slightly lifted, settled down once more over the North, accompanied by the usual military controversies.

The conservative press, including the *World*, the *Herald*, and the *Express*, again pounced upon the Secretary of War and the radical reprobates in Congress. They charged Stanton and Halleck with having mismanaged the whole campaign by peremptorily ordering Burnside across the Rappahannock and to the attack at Fredericksburg without regard to mili-

[12] George C. Eggleston, *The History of the Confederate War*, II, 22-28.

[13] *Daily Tribune*, December 15, 1862.

tary expediency or foresight,[14] and they demanded a shake-up in the Lincoln administration.

The Greeley advocate immediately rose to the defense of the unfortunate Burnside and repelled the onslaughts hurled at radical representatives in Washington. It concluded that the Union commander had undoubtedly been disappointed at the strength of the rebel position and possibly some miscalculations had occurred.[15] But the battle had been lost as the result of "a combination of adverse influences" for which those directing operations were not to blame.[16] Even though there had possibly been a want of information or some error in judgment displayed along the line, there existed "no cause for despondency, much less for despair." The administration, admittedly deficient in some particulars, appeared to be the best available, and now was no time to jeopardize the Union cause by "swapping horses." If all true patriots would stand by the government and stand by themselves, traitors everywhere would "yet be made to bite the dust." [17]

But the optimistic tone in which the *Tribune* endeavored to dispel the despondency of the North could not endure long, for in reality the disaster at Fredericksburg had only added to the discouragement of Greeley, and his confidence in the ability of the administration to carry the war through to a

[14] *Ibid.*, December 18, 24, 1862.
[15] *Ibid.*, December 17, 1862.
[16] *Ibid.*, December 19, 1862.
[17] *Ibid.*, December 20, 1862.

successful conclusion had been terribly shaken. And so, when the radical element conspired to reinvigorate the government through the process of decapitation, his sympathies were with the movement. A caucus of Republican Senators resolved to compel Lincoln to revamp his Cabinet, eliminating those who detracted from the efficient prosecution of the war. The blow was aimed primarily at Seward, but the tactful President so manipulated affairs that both Seward and Chase resigned, whereupon neither resignation was accepted, and the Cabinet continued to represent both radical and conservative viewpoints.

In spite of contrary declarations only two days previous, the *Tribune* concluded that the war had not been conducted "in accordance with the popular wish and judgment," and a change in the administration appeared so imminent that any attempt to retard it would be decidedly unadvisable.[18] Although professing to accept "the situation of affairs" as one which it had "neither attempted to change or reinstate," [19] it advised that men of such caliber as Seward and Chase should be substituted for less capable talent.[20]

Before the year ended, Greeley had so far lost faith in the ability of Lincoln to weather the crisis and guide the ship of state safely into port, that for the first time his mind turned toward peace. Failure

[18] *Ibid.*, December 22, 1862.
[19] *Ibid.*, December 23, 1862.
[20] *Weekly Tribune*, December 27, 1862.

in the fall elections, repudiation of the Emancipation Proclamation by a considerable portion of the Northern people, growing disaffection in the Northwest accentuated by the Vallandigham movement,[21] and repeated military reverses, so undermined his morale that he decided upon peace through foreign mediation, and, according to Raymond, determined to "drive Lincoln into it." [22]

In furtherance of the project, he appears to have approached Vallandigham, both by letter and personal interview, concerning the possibilities of foreign interference.[23] More important, however, was his contact with Mercier, the French Minister at Washington. He interviewed the Paris diplomat, requesting intervention on the part of the French government as a preliminary step in ending the war.[24] Unacquainted with all the peculiarities of

[21] See letter to Augustus F. Allen, April 8, 1863, on his alarm at Copperhead activities, Miscellaneous Greeley MS. Collection.

[22] "Extracts from the Journal of Henry J. Raymond" (edited by his son), *Scribner's Monthly*, XIX, 705.

[23] *Ibid.*, 705; James L. Vallandigham, *A Life of Clement L. Vallandigham*, 223. Henry J. Raymond records in his *Journal* that Collector Barney of New York informed him that, having heard Greeley was in correspondence with Vallandigham on mediation, he went to the *Tribune* office to investigate further and "Greeley's chief assistant" (evidently Gay) not only confirmed the report, but said his chief "had become so alarmed about the war that he was determined to have it ended on any terms." On January 23, 1865, Vallandigham wrote Greeley a letter in which he refers to a former correspondence with regard to intervention, and at the same time, makes mention of their common efforts in behalf of mediation two years before — efforts which had been defeated by Seward, Weed, and others. See Vallandigham, 402, 403.

[24] J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, VI, 83, 84.

Greeley, but recognizing him as the most influential of American journalists and a prominent supporter of the administration — in fact so prominent that he seemed to have dictated Union policy on several occasions — Mercier naturally attached considerable importance to the proposal as an indication of weakness and hesitancy on the part of the government and a new tendency in public opinion not averse to an abrupt cessation of hostilities through an arbitrated peace.[25]

The wily Napoleon III, fearful of the effect upon his Mexican enterprise of a complete Union triumph, and anxious to ingratiate himself with the French people by terminating the American war and reopening the cotton trade, had already endeavored unsuccessfully to enlist the coöperation of England and Russia in a joint offer of mediation. When informed by the French Ambassador concerning the apparent drift of sentiment in the North, he resolved to proceed with an intervention project unaided by other European powers. And so Mercier received instructions to suggest to the American Secretary of State, "informal conferences" with the Confederacy.[26] Seward was thoroughly indignant at the mischievous interference with state affairs on the part of Greeley, whom he considered liable to the penalties of the "Logan Act" specifically prohibiting

[25] "Extracts from the Journal of Henry J. Raymond," *Scribner's Monthly*, XIX, 706.

[26] Instructions sent January 9, 1863; see Nicolay and Hay, VI, 62-70.

unofficial communication with foreign representatives.[27] The procedure conveyed an impression of divided councils and threatened injurious consequences for the future. At best, it had served to weaken the government in the estimation of foreign diplomats and rendered the task of the State Department more difficult in upholding the power and prestige of the nation in the eyes of the world.

In conformity with the mediation project, the *Tribune* dilated on the disadvantages of war and the blessings of peace, and supplemented other propaganda designed to shape the Northern mind to an acceptance of intervention. In case the Confederate leaders proposed a cessation of hostilities and requested that their alleged grievances be submitted for arbitration to a friendly, disinterested republic, the North should enter into the project; for after all, it was "almost impossible to make a good War or a bad Peace." [28] Even though negotiations failed, such procedure would at least draw forth an ultimatum from the Davis government, which, if set forth advantageously, would enhance the nation in the estimation of the civilized world.[29] On through the gloomy months of 1863, such arguments dinned in the ears of a war-weary people, disheartened by failure, yet struggling on in the hope of saving the nation.[30]

[27] "Extracts from the Journal of Henry J. Raymond," *Scribner's Monthly*, XIX, 706.

[28] *Daily Tribune*, January 10, 1863.

[29] *Ibid.*, January 17, 1863.

[30] See letter to Theodore Tilton, editor of *The Independent*,

Not long after Fredericksburg, Burnside was displaced by Hooker. Again a Union Army prepared to drive through toward the Confederate capital, and again a promising campaign collapsed at Chancellorsville.[31] The editorial efforts of Greeley reveal his utter bewilderment during the next two months of gloom and anxious suspense. A trial of emancipation had failed to "bring the traitors to their marrow bones" and had apparently demonstrated its failure as a military measure. In his despair, the forlorn journalist had grasped at foreign mediation, but the effort was in vain and only provided another opportunity for a host of enemies to pounce upon his back. Twice he had placed the utmost confidence in a Union commander unhampered by a pro-slavery disposition, and he had inspired the public to anticipate a swift, decisive blow at the Confederacy, only to confess later, another humiliating disaster. The pro-slavery press howled about his ears, laying the blame for every military reverse at the door of the insane abolitionists, and charging the government with an attempt to destroy the Union by a foolhardy prolongation of the war. The Copperheads of the Northwest poured their denunciations down upon

June 7, 1863, Greeley MSS. Even after the Battle of Gettysburg, the *Tribune* still favored foreign intervention even though it should come from a nation not at heart friendly to the Union. It would seize the "extended weapon by the hilt rather than the point," call attention to the recent victories of the North, and instruct the mediators to advise the rebels to abandon a losing cause. *Daily Tribune*, July 8, 1863.

[31] For this campaign, see William R. Livermore, *The Story of the Civil War*, Part III, Book I, 143, 144; Eggleston, 97, 120.

the administration, threatening to force a peace involving "another nasty compromise" and a surrender of all the ground which had been gained in the struggle for freedom. And finally, recognition of the Confederacy by England hovered menacingly over the North and promised, with every Union reverse, to deal a mortal blow to the Union.

The perplexed Greeley knew not which way to turn, and the *Tribune*, waxing hot and cold by turns, expounded an uncertain doctrine often filled with glaring inconsistencies. Unable to disregard the vindictive thrusts of the pro-slavery element, it would rise in defense of the administration to repel a charge of intentionally mismanaging military affairs in order to dissolve the Union.[32] Then, it would turn suddenly upon that same administration and mete out a severe chastisement coupled with stern words of advice for the future. Seizing upon a report from Washington that Lincoln hoped for the best at Vicksburg and yet was prepared for the worst, it warned that in case of failure, the government would have a great deal to explain. McDowell, Pope, and Hooker all failed because troops which should have been thrown into the battle were allowed to lie idle miles away. There was "a limit to human endurance," and if Grant failed at Vicksburg, the loyal people of the North might not longer tolerate "the men in whom they have confided, and who only day after day have given proof that they can neither

[32] *Daily Tribune*, May 12, 1863.

comprehend nor grapple successfully with the magnitude and the demands of the tasks before them." [33] A little later, it admitted that the administration faced a difficult problem in attempting to properly direct and supply armies scattered over such a wide area. But it would be held responsible; great credit was in store in case of success; the severest condemnation in case of failure.[34]

Before the North entirely recovered from the shock of Chancellorsville, Lee had launched an offensive designed to carry the war again into enemy territory — this time beyond Washington into southern Pennsylvania. In the last days of June, the Union Army moved northward into Maryland, where General Meade assumed command. Meade hurried on north to place himself between Lee and Baltimore, and after some maneuvering, the two opposing armies stumbled on to each other at Gettysburg. A three days battle ensued resulting in a Northern victory, and Lee again headed towards the Potomac.[35]

While these developments were in progress, the *Tribune* welcomed the invasion of the North as an opportunity to make up a decisive issue; if Grant should be beaten at Vicksburg, and Lee succeeded in the Eastern offensive, the North would "acknowledge the corn." [36] When the *Times* attacked such an attitude as "weak-kneed" cowardliness, it backwat-

[33] *Ibid.*, June 3, 1863.
[34] *Ibid.*, June 11, 1863.
[35] James K. Hosmer, *The Appeal to Arms, 1861-63*, 285-305.
[36] *Daily Tribune*, June 17, 1863.

ered somewhat by minimizing the possibility of Confederate triumph.[37] Thoroughly disgusted with Hooker for his inactivity following Chancellorsville, it heartily approved of the change in command, hopeful that Meade, although inexperienced with the handling of a large army, would prove capable of saving the Union.[38] As the opposing armies maneuvered for position in southern Pennsylvania, a fairly optimistic note was sounded, not necessarily predicting a Union victory, but calling attention to a lull in peace talk and a growing intolerance of Copperheadism, as indications that behind the dark clouds there was a "silver lining." [39]

With the Confederate Army in full retreat toward the Potomac, Greeley half-apologetically confessed to participation in "the general voice" which had "accused the constitutional rulers and leaders of the Nation of imbecility and incompetency," but now he stood ready to accord the promised "Well-done" to the administration "as faithful and steadfast, if not omniscient pilots across unsounded, treacherous, perilous seas." [40]

The *Tribune* clung confidently to Meade throughout the entire Gettysburg episode. Even before the decisive engagement, the North was assured that the new Union commander would not retire from a battle half fought, as did McClellan at Antietam,

[37] *New York Times*, June 17, 1863; *Daily Tribune*, June 22, 1863.
[38] *Daily Tribune*, June 29, 1863.
[39] *Ibid.*, July 1, 1863.
[40] *Ibid.*, July 9, 1863; *Weekly Tribune*, July 11, 1863.

and allow Lee to escape again into Virginia.[41] When Lee withdrew, encountering practically no resistance, the public was informed of a "well conceived plan" on the part of Meade to cut off the retreat by an encircling movement rather than by an attack from the rear.[42] When such a movement failed to materialize and Lee entered Virginia with the remnants of his ill-starred expedition safely intact, the *Tribune* retreated as gracefully as possible by lamely shifting part of the blame from Meade to his subordinates, and vociferously tramping on Halleck for failure to furnish adequate reënforcements.[43]

The victory at Gettysburg, as well as the triumph at Vicksburg, encouraged the loyal people of the North, and aroused in them a new determination to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion. Even Greeley, now felt "more than hopeful" that the rebellion would be stamped out and the Union preserved.[44] The *Tribune* reflected the revived spirit of the North, and throughout the remainder of the year it maintained a more favorable attitude toward the administration than it had exhibited since the early days of the war. It suddenly ceased the intervention propaganda, and refused to countenance any efforts at peace implying conciliation of the South. The *Herald* was informed that peace meetings were premature and would only encourage the rebels to

[41] *Daily Tribune*, July 1, 1863.
[42] *Ibid.*, July 7, 1863.
[43] *Ibid.*, July 13, 15, 1863.
[44] Letter to John H. Stevens, August 16, 1863, Greeley MSS.

more determined resistance.[45] All peace moves should be left entirely within the province of the administration, it urged repeatedly; the country could trust Lincoln to determine the appropriate time for entering into discussions of that nature.[46]

The elections of 1863 furnished striking evidence of an improved morale among the people in all sections of the North.[47] The *Tribune* observed the unmistakable signs of renewed faith in the Union cause and imbibed more freely than ever, a friendly optimism with reference to the administration. "Let us trust our Government," it urged; "it is doing its very best; and its progress during the present year has been great." "Half-truths" as well as "glowing fabrications" set forth to the prejudice of the President were severely condemned, for even though Lincoln and his advisers now and then erred in judgment, they were ever "honest, faithful and devoted," anxious that the war be honorably terminated at the earliest possible moment and "straining every nerve to that sole end." [48]

In November, the accession to the Unionist ranks of Illinois and New York, following in the wake of thirteen other states which had previously pronounced in favor of the administration, capped the climax of the Northern revival. Lincoln supporters gained control of practically every office in the

[45] *Daily Tribune*, July 10, 1863.
[46] *Ibid.*, August 4, 24, October 22, 1863.
[47] *Ibid.*, October 22, 1863.
[48] *Ibid.*, October 21, 23, 1863.

Empire State as well as both branches of the legislature.[49] And notwithstanding the regrettable Congressional elections of 1862, administration supporters could boast of a safe majority in the National House of Representatives.[50] "The steadfast and rising courage of the loyal States," unrest and impaired vitality within the Confederacy, and a constantly increasing indisposition on the part of European powers "to burn their fingers in the Confederate mess," all pointed in the direction of ultimate Union triumph, according to the Greeley organ. Already over one-third of the area and nearly one-half the white population of the seceding states had been reclaimed for the Union, and by the following May, despite possible postponement by "military imbecility or treachery," there would be no trace left of the wretched Confederacy, the North was assured.[51]

News of a Union victory at Chattanooga seemed a partial fulfillment of the prophecy, and the *Tribune* was stimulated to new heights of optimism,

[49] *Ibid.*, November 4, 16, 1863. This was accomplished without the aid of the soldier vote which Greeley insisted figured so prominently in the results of 1862. A bill granting soldiers the right to vote by proxy was passed by the New York legislature in April, 1863, but was vetoed by Governor Seymour. The Democrats had claimed that, in the case of Wisconsin, voting by proxy aided the Republicans because soldiers in the field were compelled to vote the Union ticket, but the New York bill had obviated that objectionable feature. *Ibid.*, April 27, 1863.

[50] *Ibid.*, November 13, 1863. The *Tribune* was well satisfied with the election of Schuyler Colfax as Speaker of the House, especially since eight border state men supported the Indiana Republican. *Ibid.*, December 8, 1863.

[51] *Ibid.*, November 16, 21, 1863.

confident that Grant had won "the greatest victory of the war" in the West by opening up the very heart of the Confederacy to a subsequent inevitable and fatal blow. "For the first time, to the human eye, the Rebellion visibly totters to its fall," it exclaimed, "and the victories of the Union approach their consummation. The heart of the nation beats high with hope; its purpose strengthens; its religious faith is deepened; the people see the glory which the Heavens declare." [52]

In the East, no important military operations transpired for some time after Gettysburg. But in March, 1864, Grant was made a Lieutenant-General, transferred to the East, and placed in command of all the Union Armies; thus Virginia promised to be the scene of additional campaigning, as the little General of "unconditional surrender" fame, prepared to drive the versatile Lee back on to Richmond.

The *Tribune* had been rather slow to acknowledge the military prowess of Grant. After the rather startling victory at Forts Henry and Donelson, it merely indicated that his nomination to a Major-Generalship had been confirmed by the Senate.[53] A short time later, the Union leader was caught napping at Shiloh and nearly lost all the laurels he had won by previous exploits. When he attempted to explain away the element of surprise in a public let-

[52] *Ibid.*, November 25, 27, 1863.
[53] *Ibid.*, February 20, 1862.

ter, the *Tribune* ridiculed his defense and advised the injudicious commander to think twice before "rushing into print" again.[54] Shortly afterwards, it confessed that Grant fought bravely, but as yet had failed to develop some of the qualities of a great commander.[55] Success in subsequent operations changed that attitude, however, and Easterners were apprised of "the steady purpose, the unshaken fortitude, the fertile talent, (and) the heroic determination" which characterized the hero of Vicksburg.[56]

When "little Ulysses" transferred his renowned genius to the Eastern field of operations, the most influential organ of public opinion in the country warned that his elevation should not be "a mockery or a bubble"; the Union Armies were now under the command of one who would not retreat from an inferior force; one who never acknowledged defeat; one who inevitably struck so hard that some one was bound to "get hurt"; and a fair trial, unhampered by any restrictions, should be accorded the new Commander-in-chief.[57]

By May, Grant was ready to move forward by way of the Wilderness route, proposing to drive Lee back by sheer hard fighting and the use of superior forces, but the first encounter ended a draw after a terrific struggle of two days.[58] Then followed a

[54] *Ibid.*, May 5, 1862.
[55] *Ibid.*, May 15, 1862.
[56] *Ibid.*, July 8, 1863.
[57] *Ibid.*, March 9, 18, 1864.
[58] James K. Hosmer, *Outcome of the Civil War, 1863-65*, 86-91.

flanking movement destined to end in a disastrous failure at Cold Harbor. Finally, conscious of the rising dissatisfaction in the North at the appalling sacrifice of life — over fifty thousand casualties since leaving the Rapidan — and convinced that Lee could not be crushed in battle, Grant successfully eluded his skillful opponent by a long detour eastward, crossed the James River at City Point, and approached Petersburg, which commanded Richmond from the South.[59] Had subordinates acted promptly, the stronghold might have been surprised and seized while weakly defended. But a short delay allowed the Confederates time for reënforcement, and the incredulous Lee, at last persuaded that the enemy had vanished, moved his army southward.[60] Attempts to seize Petersburg by assault culminated in another horrible slaughter, and Grant settled down to siege operations destined to last throughout the ensuing winter.[61]

Notwithstanding returning discouragement and

[59] About this time quite a sensation was created in New York City by the publication in the *World* and the *Journal of Commerce* of a false Presidential proclamation recommending prayer for the success of Union arms, and authorizing a new draft of 400,000 men. Temporarily the two papers which had broadcast the propaganda, plainly designed to produce a popular revulsion against the government, were suppressed, but it soon developed that they had no part in the conspiracy, having printed the report in good faith. Papers known to be in entire sympathy with the administration came to their support, confessing they would likewise have printed the false report had not certain exigencies prevented. See *National Intelligencer*, May 19, 1864.

[60] Eggleston, II, 259.

[61] Hosmer, *Outcome of the Civil War, 1863-65*, 99-105.

unrest at the North over the bloody sacrifices and misfortunes from the Wilderness to Petersburg, the *Tribune* held confidently to Grant. To be sure, it was impressed with the excessive Federal losses and confessed that the struggle was "awful to contemplate," but every move in the direction of Richmond was interpreted as portending a speedy annihilation of the enemy and the collapse of Southern resistance.[62] And, although the campaign around Petersburg entailed more heavy losses and misfortunes, Greeley minimized the importance of the "Crater" affair, and declared: "every day's experience strengthens our faith in Lieutenant-General Grant." [63]

[62] *Daily Tribune*, May 10, 12, 1864.
[63] *Ibid.*, July 2, August 2, 1864.

Chapter VI

THE NIAGARA PEACE EPISODE

In the summer of 1864, Horace Greeley became involved in one of the most unique episodes of his startling career. All the motives and impulses which may have actuated the eccentric philosopher to participate in an affair embarrassing to the administration, and boding ill for his own personal reputation, are extremely difficult to determine; the strange quirks of a fanciful and impetuous disposition often led the keenly sensitive mind on tangential by-paths for which no rational explanation is entirely adequate.

The Niagara peace episode centers around the activities of three commissioners, Jacob Thompson, Clement C. Clay, Jr., and James Holcombe, who were dispatched to Canada by Jefferson Davis to operate in the interest of the Confederate government.[1] Among various operations engaging their attention during the spring and summer of 1864, was that of fostering a peace movement, already

[1] For more details concerning the commissioners and their mission, see Frank H. Severance, *Peace Episodes on the Niagara*, Buffalo Historical Society Publications, volume XVIII; J. B. Castleman, *Active Service*; E. C. Kirkland, *The Peacemakers of 1864*; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies*, Series II, vol. III, 174, 1194; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, vol. XLIII, part II, 930-936.

initiated in the North by Copperheads and Peace Democrats.

Clay and Holcombe settled down at Niagara Falls in the Clifton House, ostensibly as tourists and gentlemen of leisure, but in reality in order to be conveniently near those whom they expected to assist and influence, while Thompson operated in the neighborhood of Windsor and Toronto. Encouragement, funds, and even arms were furnished to the Peace Democrats of the Northwest, in the hope that they would effect a break with the East and form a Western confederacy.[2] Conferences were held with anti-administration leaders from New York and other states, and the approaching Democratic convention was constantly kept in mind as a possible instrumentality, if properly controlled, for securing a Northern verdict at the polls in favor of the immediate cessation of hostilities and the recognition of Southern independence.[3]

In the course of their maneuvers at Niagara Falls, the Confederate commissioners came into contact with George N. Sanders of Kentucky, a notorious contriver with a colorful career, famed in Europe for his "rabid Republicanism," and identified in America as a defaulter to the National government to the extent of five thousand dollars.[4] Through

[2] See *Report of J. Thompson and J. P. Holcombe to J. P. Benjamin*, published by the Union Congressional Committee.

[3] Jefferson Davis, *Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*, II, 611.

[4] *New York Herald*, August 17, 1861.

various associates in the North, Sanders effected some contacts with the peace element. In the course of time, he formed an acquaintance with "Colorado" Jewett, a promising go-between, who had spent much time flitting back and forth between the United States and Europe in the interest of peace through foreign intervention,[5] and in that connection, had carried on some correspondence with Greeley during the gloomy winter of 1862-63.

Early in the summer of 1864, it is evident that the mind of Greeley had once more turned in the direction of peace, despite the optimistic assurances of the *Tribune*. Imbued with an abhorrence of war scarcely less pronounced than his hatred for slavery, the advocacy of war had always presented to him a seemingly necessary, but painful alternative in the struggle for freedom, and he submitted to it "awkwardly." Had only "one or two considerable battles" materialized in accordance with early predictions, he might have gracefully acquiesced in the ordeal, but through numerous all but futile campaigns, the North had poured out its blood, and by 1864, Greeley confided to a personal friend that he heartily wished the sacrifice could have been avoided "by buying and freeing every slave at the Planter's valuation." [6]

When reports filtered into the *Tribune* Office concerning the doings at Niagara, the interest of the

[5] See William C. Jewett, *Mediation Address to England.*

[6] Letter to Mrs. R. M. Whipple, March 14, 1864, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

despondent editor was instantly aroused. There were rumors of confidential interviews between "certain distinguished Confederates" and leading Democrats, "telegraphic whispers of overtures for reconstruction," and finally, a published dispatch penned by Sanders "foreshadowing a Peace on a basis advantageous and acceptable to both sections." [7] It was even understood that Clay had agreed to write a letter to the approaching Democratic National Convention at Chicago outlining a basis for peace involving the restoration of the Union.[8]

Whether the "distinguished Confederates" were authorized to make such generous overtures or not, Greeley perceived the danger in allowing them to hobnob so intimately with leaders of the peace movement. He had watched with increasing concern, the disloyal tendencies of Peace Democrats, particularly the semi-treasonable utterances of the Copperheads in the Ohio Valley, and at one time declared that "the most imminent peril of the National cause (was) that of northern defection and hostility rather than of Southern treason." [9] To be sure, he longed for peace, but not a peace involving concessions to slavery. He despised the Copperheads especially for their pro-slavery inclinations, and he understood readily enough that, should the Peace Democracy succeed in undermining confidence in the adminis-

[7] See Greeley's statement in *Independent* of July 26, 1864, quoted in *The Rebellion Record* (Frank Moore, ed.), XI, 537.

[8] *Daily Tribune*, July 30, 1864.

[9] Letter to John H. Stevens, August 16, 1863, Greeley MSS.

tration sufficiently to secure a repudiation at the polls, thus bringing the war to a halt, any adjustment which would follow must involve either disunion or an outrageous compromise on the slavery issue.[10]

By all means, thought Greeley, "sham Democracy" should not be allowed to capitalize peace proffers from Confederate sources by parading them before a war-weary people — perhaps in a highly distorted form — as additional proof that the administration indiscriminately prosecuted the war for the benefit of the Republican party and the complete subjugation of a portion of the American people.[11] If genuine offers were forthcoming worthy of consideration, they should be welcomed as heralds of returning tranquillity; if unacceptable, they should be set forth in their true light, and capitalized in the approaching campaign to the advantage of the Union party.[12]

Sometime during June, Sanders suddenly announced to Clay and Holcombe that Greeley would confer with them,[13] and presently, a letter appeared at the *Tribune* Office from Jewett stating that "two ambassadors of Davis & Co." were in Canada clothed "with full and complete powers for a peace." It requested that Greeley come at once for an inter-

[10] *Daily Tribune*, November 16, 1863.

[11] *Ibid.*, September 22, 1864.

[12] *Ibid.*, April 3, 1865.

[13] It is not altogether clear how Greeley was approached the first time. He speaks of a private letter from Sanders, but undoubtedly Jewett also figured somewhere in the deal. See *The Rebellion Record*, XI, 537, as to the letter.

view, or if the protection of the government would be sent to Sanders and his two friends, they would come to meet him.[14]

Here was an excellent opportunity to grasp the sword by the hilt, and the anxious editor passed the missive on to Lincoln accompanied by a letter portraying the almost universal desire for peace and the hesitation of a discouraged people to submit to "fresh conscriptions," "further wholesale devastations," and "new rivers of human blood." Even though the Davis emissaries should not be fully authorized to negotiate, and a just peace was still unattainable, the President was urged to set at rest the wide-spread conviction that the government did not earnestly desire a termination of the war, by tendering to the commissioners an outline of terms acceptable to the North as a tentative basis for ending the conflict. The plan suggested by Greeley involved a restoration of the Union, the complete abolition of slavery, an unqualified amnesty for all political offenders, and the payment of four hundred million dollars to slave owners as compensation for losses sustained through emancipation.[15]

Lincoln had no confidence in the story of Jewett, and neither did he propose to assume the initiative in any peace overtures. But in order to preclude charges of indifference on the part of the administration and disillusion the troublesome Greeley, he

[14] Severance, 83.

[15] Letter to Lincoln, July 7, 1864, Horace Greeley, *The American Conflict*, II, 664; *Daily Tribune*, March 31, 1865.

wrote the latter on July 9 as follows: "If you can find any person anywhere professing to have any proposition of Jefferson Davis in writing, for peace, embracing the restoration of the Union and the abandonment of slavery, whatever else it embraces, say to him he may come to me with you." [16]

Greeley was disappointed and replied that he refused to function as an agent of the government in the matter, and anyway the commissioners were not likely to show him their credentials; nevertheless, he would proceed with the hopeless task of securing additional information concerning their status. Two days later, he reiterated the assertion of Jewett that "two persons duly commissioned and empowered to negotiate for peace" were desirous of conferring with the President, but mentioning nothing concerning the terms.[17] Apparently anxious to obviate any

[16] J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, IX, 187; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series III, vol. IV, 486. Tarbell records that Senator Harlan of Iowa, who felt well satisfied with the manner in which Greeley had been disposed of by the President in the peace maneuvers, remarked jokingly to Lincoln afterwards that he had not sent "a very good ambassador to Niagara." "Well, I'll tell you about that, Harlan," replied the President. "Greeley kept abusing me for not entering into peace negotiations. He said he believed we could have peace if I would do my part and when he began to urge that I send an ambassador to Niagara to meet Confederate emissaries, I just thought I would let him go up and crack that nut for himself." Ida M. Tarbell, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, III, 198.

[17] Both letters to Greeley are printed in full in Don C. Seitz, *Life of Horace Greeley*, 251-253. The only communication Greeley had received meantime, was a letter from Sanders, July 12, merely saying again that the commissioners were ready to cross the border; it was strictly silent with reference to terms of negotiations or the authority with which the Davis representatives operated.

misunderstanding or charge of indifference on his part, Lincoln dispatched John Hay, his private secretary, to New York with an official letter expressing disappointment at the failure of the emissaries to appear and again requesting Greeley to escort them to Washington if they accepted the two stipulations set forth on July 9.[18] The veteran journalist then informed Hay that an order of safe conduct would be necessary in furtherance of the project, and the latter was immediately authorized by the President to issue one.[19]

Armed with this order, Greeley set out for Niagara Falls. It is fairly certain that he had never informed Sanders or Jewett of the conditions laid down by the President with regard to initiating negotiations. And, although the order of safe conduct in no way abrogated those conditions, he apparently still had no intention of mentioning them to the commissioners,[20] for, in case the Confederates were unauthorized to comply with such requirements, the affair would be nipped in the bud, and all peace discussion effectively squelched.[21] The essential thing in his estimation, was to get the Davis envoys to Washington irrespective of the terms they might be willing to accept or propose. If their proposals were outrageously unjust and unacceptable, the coun-

[18] *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series III, vol. IV, 496.

[19] *Ibid.*, 501.

[20] Nicolay and Hay, IX, 194.

[21] Such was doubtless what Lincoln wanted and expected.

try would know of the righteous indignation with which the administration spurned them. If Lincoln considered it advisable to present an offer to them involving restoration of the Union and the abandonment of slavery — terms which Greeley had previously suggested — the country would know with what sincerity the authorities at Washington strove for peace on a basis appealing to the justice of all mankind.[22]

Consequently, upon arriving at the American side of the Falls on July 17, Greeley sent a message across the border, via Jewett, merely informing the Confederates that if they were duly appointed representatives of the Confederate government bearing propositions of peace, he had been authorized by Lincoln, and provided with the necessary credentials, to conduct them safely to Washington.[23] Clay and Holcombe were surprised and dismayed; surprised that the Northern government, which had ever maintained an attitude of "no negotiations with rebels in arms," should suddenly express a willingness to settle the issues at stake in the war through diplo-

[22] *The Rebellion Record*, XI, 537; *Daily Tribune*, July 25, August 5, 1864. Hay maintains that Greeley was opposed to the proffer of terms by Lincoln under any circumstances, desiring that the commissioners should make unreasonable and unacceptable proposals, which might be capitalized to the advantage of the Union party. However, in his letter to Lincoln of July 7, in which he first proposed the peace negotiations, Greeley suggested terms which the President might see fit to offer the Confederates. See William R. Thayer, *The Life and Letters of John Hay*, I, 177.

[23] Nicolay and Hay, IX, 190, 191; *Diary of Gideon Welles*, (John T. Morse, Jr., ed.), II, 83.

macy and accept a negotiated peace without even so much as mentioning the restoration of the Union as a condition; dismayed, because the new turn of affairs jeopardized the primary object of their mission.

They immediately called Thompson into conference at St. Catherines to discuss the next move in the game. Since they were not duly appointed and empowered to discuss terms of peace, the logical course of procedure was to inform Greeley that he had been mistaken as to their character and desires, and that nothing more could be accomplished than a mere "informal interchange of opinions" as private citizens. But such a termination of the affair would exhibit an earnest effort to end the war on the part of the Lincoln administration, thus allaying disaffection in the North and undermining the strength of the peace party — an outcome quite different than that which Jefferson Davis expected from their mission. In some manner, the negotiations had to be continued in order to provide opportunity for maneuvering into a less disadvantageous position.[24]

And so the commissioners expressed their regret that the safe conduct of the President had been proffered them "under some misapprehension of facts," explaining that while not duly accredited by Jefferson Davis, they were in the "confidential em-

[24] Letter of Holcombe to Benjamin, November 16, 1864, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies*, Series II, vol. III, 1237.

ployment" of their government, "entirely familiar with its wishes and opinions" on peace, and if allowed to proceed to Washington, undoubtedly the required credentials from Richmond would be forthcoming.[25]

Such a reply wrecked the plans of Greeley in spite of all the precautions taken to land his enterprising accessories at the White House. The only recourse left was to transmit the disappointing information to Lincoln, who immediately dispatched Hay to Niagara with a blank note addressed "To Whom it may Concern," announcing a willingness to receive and consider "any proposition which embraces the restoration of Peace, the integrity of the whole Union, and the abandonment of Slavery, and which comes by and with an authority that can control the armies now at war against the United States," the bearers of it to have "safe conduct both ways." [26]

Realizing that the delivery of this new communication had rendered further efforts at Niagara futile, Greeley conveyed his regrets to Clay and Holcombe for the "sad termination of the initiatory steps taken for peace," and departed for New York, still preserving a determined silence with regard to the conditions mentioned in the earlier instructions from Washington, and leaving the impression that the President had double-crossed every one by a sudden

[25] Letter of Clay and Holcombe to Greeley, July 18, 1864, James Parton, *The Life of Horace Greeley*, 473.

[26] Dated July 18, 1864; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series III, vol. IV, 503, 504.

reversal of policy.[27] The ultimatum of Lincoln was all that the Confederates desired, and they proceeded at once to make the most of it, charging the President with breach of faith, branding the stipulations he set forth as an affront to mankind, and alleging that the autocrat of the White House would stop short of nothing less than the complete subjugation of the South.[28]

The affair ended quite ingloriously for Greeley. Not only had the anticipated conference at Washington proved abortive, but the character of the participants in the peace debacle, together with the manner in which it had been perpetrated, left an impression among the loyal element in the North of a bunglesome attempt to undermine the government, to which an over-zealous peace enthusiast had unwittingly contributed. All the enemies of the *Tribune* immediately pounced upon poor Greeley, ridiculing the manner in which he had been lured to the Falls on a "fool's errand" and duped into a puerile compliance with the designs of the plotting rebels. The *World*, characterizing Jewett as a "dancing windbag of popinjay conceit," concluded that if the odd negotiation "were not too serious for laughter," it would "go into convulsions."[29] Even the *Post* found the matter "inexpressibly sickening." [30]

[27] Nicolay and Hay, IX, 193.

[28] These accusations were set forth in a long letter to Greeley handed to Jewett, who proceeded immediately to reveal its contents to the press. The letter is printed in full in Parton, 475-477.

[29] *New York World*, July 22, 1864.

[30] See *Daily Tribune*, July 26, 1864.

Harassed on all sides by such provoking jabs, and doubtless pestered by an uneasy conscience, the distressed journalist turned his irritable disposition loose upon the President and some of his advisers, whom he felt inclined to blame for his embarrassment and the misfortune of the nation. The *Tribune* corroborated the contention of the Confederates that Lincoln had suddenly changed front in the Niagara maneuvers, necessitating "a rude withdrawal of a courteous overture for negotiation" and substituting "fresh blasts of war to the bitter end" — a charge which created in the minds of many not better informed, an impression of vacillation, untrustworthiness, and even downright dishonesty on the part of the President.[31]

A grievous error had been committed in not inviting the commissioners to Washington even though they were not at the time clothed with full powers to negotiate for peace, quoth Greeley. An acceptable proposal from them after receiving authorization from Richmond would have elicited universal rejoicing;[32] a demand for independence would have aroused within the North added enthusiasm for the war and "been worth to any Government a re-enforcement of One Hundred Thousand Men to its armies."[33] Had the envoys been totally discredited by the Davis regime, the Washington authorities would still "have made a strong point on

[31] *Ibid.*, August 5, 1864; Nicolay and Hay, IX, 194, 195.
[32] *Daily Tribune*, August 5, 1864.
[33] *Ibid.*, July 25, 1864.

the Rebellion." [34] In that spirit the *Tribune* labored throughout the remainder of the summer, averring that it was "high time matters were coming to a point" with respect to peace.[35]

Appreciating the effect of such an antagonistic attitude on the part of the great New York journal, Lincoln endeavored to quiet the disgruntled editor by an invitation to air his grievances personally at the White House. But Greeley declined, complaining that the President was surrounded by his "bitterest personal enemies," and then he launched forth with new abuses, upbraiding Lincoln for not having received Alexander Stephens on an alleged mission of peace the preceding summer, and for failure to dispatch representatives to negotiate with Davis after the fall of Vicksburg.[36]

In spite of a strict silence on the part of the *Tribune* with regard to the indispensable conditions of negotiation laid down by Lincoln and disregarded by

[34] *Ibid.*, August 23, 1864.

[35] *Ibid.*, August 12, 1864.

[36] As for the Stephens project, either Greeley was not responsible for the editorials of July, 1863 — which is extremely improbable — or he was guilty of the grossest inconsistency. During the summer of 1863, Stephens had requested permission to proceed to Washington in a Confederate gunboat, ostensibly to deliver a communication from Jefferson Davis to Lincoln. The request was turned down and the *Tribune* approved the action, contending that the proposition involved the rejection of no peace offer, and terming the Stephens proposal outrageous. Later, the *Tribune* declared that the main object of the Confederate Vice-President was to protest against the arming of negroes by the North. *Daily Tribune*, July 13, 30, 1863; see Lincoln's defence of his action in a letter to Greeley, August 9, 1864, *An Autobiography of Abraham Lincoln* (N. W. Stephenson, ed.), 423, 424.

Greeley in communicating with the Davis emissaries at Niagara, some evidence gradually appeared to counteract the aspersions of untrustworthiness and dishonesty hurled at the President by the Confederates and largely subscribed to by their Northern intercessor. In less than a fortnight, the *Times* designated the part of Greeley in the peace transaction as "more important than he is inclined to represent it," and proceeded to point out his failure to heed the original instructions from Washington. Then a vigorous newspaper war ensued, the editor of the *Tribune* denying that he had ever been required to impose the conditions set forth in the "To Whom it may Concern" missive, and insisting that the President finally acquiesced in his view of the matter "so far as to consent to receive whatever proposition agents duly accredited from Richmond might see fit to offer." [37]

Finally, as the only manner of presenting the much controverted subject properly before the people, Lincoln requested permission to publish the whole Niagara correspondence, with the exception of a few passages which revealed great despondency in the *Tribune* Office.[38] When Greeley insisted that either all or none of it be permitted to see the light of day, Secretary Welles urged the publication in full,[39] but

[37] *Daily Tribune*, August 5, 1864.

[38] See letter of Lincoln to Raymond, August 15, 1864; Henry J. Raymond, *The Life and Public Services of Abraham Lincoln*, 586, 587.

[39] *Diary of Gideon Welles*, II, 271.

Lincoln feared to reveal to the public the depths of despair to which one so influential as the *Tribune* editor had sunk during such a critical period in the life of the nation, and the controversy dragged on through a maze of misunderstanding and misrepresentation.[40]

While the newspaper feud waxed warm, the Niagara incident was serving the interests of the Confederate representatives splendidly. The Peace Democrats immediately seized the opportunity to make political capital for their cause, such journals as the *World* broadcasting alleged favorable offers of adjustment from the commissioners, and contrasting them with the stern pronunciamento of Lincoln which involved the demand of emancipation.[41]

In less than a month, Clay and Holcombe informed Richmond that the correspondence with Greeley had been so promotive of their wishes, that "all but fanatical Abolitionists" were impressed with the opinion that no peace would be forthcoming as long as the incumbent administration held the reins

[40] Nicolay and Hay, IX, 197. 198. The letter of July 7, Greeley to Lincoln, first proposing the negotiations at Niagara, finally appeared for the first time in March, 1865, in *The Manchester Examiner*, and from there found its way to America. Greeley could not understand why it had to be sent to Europe for publication, and he suggested that the *Tribune* would gladly have printed it, or the entire Niagara correspondence, at any time it became cognizant that the President considered it desirable — a version of the matter apparently not altogether in harmony with the facts. *Daily Tribune*, March 31, 1865. The correspondence did not appear until Nicolay and Hay presented it in 1890.

[41] *New York World*, July 22, 1864.

of government at the North. The exchange of notes had "tended strongly toward consolidating the Democracy and dividing the Republicans," as evidenced by the manner in which the "chagrined and incensed" editor of the *Tribune* cursed "all fools in high places" and regarded himself "as deceived and maltreated by the Administration." The "elements of convulsion and revolution existing in the North" had been greatly stimulated by the President's manifesto, the official report concluded, and there were assurances from prominent politicians that the affair had proved "the most opportune and efficient moral instrumentality for stopping the war that could have been conceived or exerted." [42]

That the peace plotters had not greatly exaggerated results in their enthusiasm is evidenced by the scare thrown into the Republican camp.[43] Henry J. Raymond, now Chairman of the Republican National Executive Committee, was alarmed at the probable effect of the "to Whom it may Concern" letter upon the approaching presidential election. After a visit to Washington in behalf of withdrawal or modification of the offending peace stipulation, he returned quickly to explain in the *Times* that the Lincoln rescript outlined only one basis of reaching an agreement, and did not preclude negotiations on

[42] C. C. Clay, Jr., to J. P. Benjamin, August 11, 1864, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series IV, vol. III, 585-587.

[43] Henry Wilson, *History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America*, III, 556.

some other basis.[44] An additional complicating factor had been introduced into a presidential contest which largely resolved itself into a final struggle for the preservation of the Union.[45]

[44] *New York World*, August 19, 1864; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series IV, vol. III, 637.

[45] As part of the aftermath of the Niagara episode, August 14, Judge Jeremiah S. Black, an associate of Commissioner Thompson in the Buchanan Cabinet, visited his former colleague in Canada. According to the report of the Davis envoys, Black professed to have come at the instance of Secretary Stanton, who desired that Thompson should go to Washington and discuss terms of peace, and then proceed to Richmond. Stanton's biographer makes it reasonably clear, however, that the War Secretary did not dispatch Black to Canada, but to the contrary, discouraged him in desiring an armistice with the South, and refused to sanction his visit to Thompson. See George C. Gorham, *Life and Public Services of Edwin M. Stanton*, II, 148-153; Castleman, 149; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series IV, vol. III, 636; *Daily Tribune*, August 23, 1864.

Chapter VII

THE FINAL STRUGGLE

The fate of the Union hung in the balance at Northern political caucuses, conventions, and ballot boxes to no less extent than on Southern battlefields — a fact particularly well demonstrated during the last phases of the contest. Not only was Northern opinion divided between Peace Democracy and Union Republicanism, but an ever widening breach of dissension within the ranks of the war party threatened to disrupt its efforts and render the Confederacy a permanent reality.

The subjects of disagreement were the closely related issues of emancipation and reconstruction, which tended to split the Union party into three more or less clearly defined factions. In his annual message to Congress in the winter of 1863, Lincoln outlined a plan of reconstruction, which offered a liberal amnesty to the Confederates and suggested a lenient arrangement for the reorganization of the disaffected states, but which specified nothing with regard to the future status of slavery beyond an acceptance of the recent laws and proclamations dealing with the subject. The moderate Republicans and some Democrats were pleased with the plan and rallied to the support of the President, along with

the conservative wing of the Cabinet represented by Seward, Welles, Bates, and Blair, and such influential characters as Thurlow Weed and Henry Raymond.

Another faction, composed of War Democrats with pro-slavery inclinations, who had coöperated in the prosecution of the war with the sole object of preserving the Union, demanded a termination at the close of the conflict of the various edicts respecting slavery, as pure war measures, and the restoration of peace on no other basis than "the Union, the Constitution, and the Laws." They hoped to capture the Democratic Convention of 1864 from the Copperhead group, and secure the nomination of General McClellan on a platform pledged to the further prosecution of the war, but sound on the emancipation issue.

Entrenched on the opposite side of Lincoln from the conservative Democrats, were the radical Republicans, represented in the Cabinet by Chase and Stanton, and including in their ranks such prominent agitators as Thaddeus Stevens, Charles Sumner, Henry Winter Davis, and Benjamin Wade. They were disgusted with the leniency of the President in dealing with the South, and they endeavored to counteract his Amnesty Proclamation by Congressional action. The Wade-Davis bill, passed during July, 1864, proposed to exclude all those who had fought voluntarily against the North from participation in reconstruction, and it stipulated abolition

of slavery as a requirement for reinstatement in the Union.

The radicals became increasingly hostile towards Lincoln during the spring of 1864, severely condemning any acts of his administration which could be capitalized to their advantage, such as arbitrary arrests or the suppression of newspapers, and laying plans to defeat his renomination.[1] They argued that he could not be reëlected, and they endeavored to swing Republican sentiment in the direction of Fremont, Benjamin F. Butler, Chase, or some other dependable exponent of their views.[2] The radical press, led by *The Independent* and the *Evening Post*, coöperated in the movement with covert attacks on Lincoln policy, and urged the postponement of the Republican convention in the hope that new developments would insure the nomination of a more acceptable candidate.[3]

With regard to the fundamental issues involved in the controversy between the two wings of the Republican party, the sympathies of Greeley were with Lincoln and the moderates. To be sure, he had fondly anticipated the ultimate extinction of slavery from the very inception of the conflict, and he had welcomed the Emancipation Proclamation as an important step toward that end. But, after all, it was

[1] *New York Sun*, May 26, 1864.

[2] A. K. McClure, *Our Presidents and How We Make Them*, 183; Allan Nevins, *Fremont*, II, 653.

[3] *New York Evening Post*, April 8, June 9, 1864; *New York Times*, April 8, 1864.

fairly apparent early in 1864 that slavery had already been so thoroughly undermined that a decisive Union victory would entail ultimate extinction, and the rapidity with which the government should move in that direction he could safely trust to Lincoln.

Consequently, although the *Tribune* repeatedly averred that permanent emancipation offered the only effective "guaranty against future conspiracies and bloody rebellions," and that reunion would be "possible or endurable only on the basis of Universal Freedom," it recognized that war involved unforeseen exigencies, and it refused to bind the hands of the administration by designating the abolition of slavery as an indispensable requisite of peace.[4] It condemned the abolitionists as readily for demanding the immediate and permanent extinction of slavery, as the Copperheads for decrying any interference with the peculiar institution, concluding that while the middle of the road policy outlined by the President was not perfect, it deserved support by all true friends of the Union.[5] The Amnesty Proclamation, denounced by the *Journal of Commerce* as "utterly abolitionist," characterized by the *Daily News* as "the Despot's Edict," upbraided by the *Evening Post* as entirely too "magnanimous or len-

[4] *Daily Tribune*, August 26, 1863; July 28, 1864. The *Tribune* expressed a willingness to leave the future of the Emancipation Proclamation, which it termed a "War edict," in the hands of the courts; if the judicial authorities decided that the Proclamation permanently freed the blacks, the government could not make terms or provisions under any circumstances re-enslaving them. *Ibid.*, August 15, 1863.

[5] *Ibid.*, February 1, 1864.

ient toward the rebels," [6] and arousing a furor of protest from the radicals in general, was greeted at Spruce and Nassau Street as a manifestation of the "wise and generous impulses" which animated the heart of honest old Abe.[7]

Furthermore, the *Tribune* refused to subscribe to the radical movement in Congress which culminated in the Wade-Davis bill. It continued the policy adopted in November, 1863, of refusing to endorse any theory of " 'State suicide,' or 'State sovereignty' or anything else that might impede an early restoration of Peace." [8] Confident that the oligarchy of the South had largely vanished, and that the North would have a new order of society with which to deal in reconstruction, the Greeley journal urged a policy insuring the early "resumption of harmonious social relations." [9] It printed some of the reconstruction proposals of Stevens, but confessed "no taste for either vengeance or spoliation." [10] It praised Sumner for his steadfast devotion to the cause of emancipation, but regretted the flood of anti-slavery resolutions with which he repeatedly deluged Congress, and refused to be committed to any of his strictures on reconstruction.[11]

[6] *Ibid.*, December 11, 1863.
[7] *Ibid.*, December 10, 1863.
[8] *Ibid.*, November 23, 1863.
[9] *Ibid.*, March 25, 1865.
[10] *Ibid.*, February 5, 1864. Likewise, with regard to the currency problem, Greeley was constantly at odds with Stevens. See *Ibid.*, January 25, February 1, 10, 1862; December 10, 1864; *Weekly Tribune*, February 25, 1865.
[11] *Daily Tribune*, February 10, 1864.

Nevertheless, past affiliations with the more prominent actors in the Republican imbroglio of 1864 tended to draw Greeley away from the Presidential faction and thrust him into the waiting arms of the radicals. The long-standing rivalry with Seward, Weed, and Raymond in New York politics had not grown less bitter with the passing years; and his three rivals afforded the mainstay of the moderate faction, the resourceful Seward ever at the elbow of the President, the masterful Weed still pulling efficacious political wires, and the ambitious Raymond, now a leading spokesman of the conservative clique, ever watchful for new worlds to conquer.

For some reason, Greeley had never hitched well with the Secretary of the Navy. Early in the war, he had attributed to Welles a government contract netting a brother-in-law, George D. Morgan, some sixty thousand dollars that should have reposed in the United States Treasury.[12] And then, the *Tribune* incessantly enquired into the affairs of the Navy Department and delighted in telling the exasperated Secretary "a few of his mistakes." [13] The Connecticut veteran naturally resented such covert flings at his ability and integrity, and permitted no opportunity to escape for a retort in kind.[14] By the summer of 1864, the battle became exceedingly warm, the *Tribune* charging Welles with "spending enormous amounts of money for worthless vessels," [15] and the

[12] *Weekly Tribune*, February 22, 1862.
[13] *Daily Tribune*, October 13, 1863; January 15, 1864.
[14] *Diary of Gideon Welles* (John T. Morse, Jr., ed.,), II, 12.
[15] *Daily Tribune*, July 28, 1864.

Secretary branding Greeley, in turn, an "erratic, unreliable . . . creature of sentiment or impulse" willing to acquiesce in any foul move in order to "accomplish his personal party schemes." [16]

On the other hand, the struggle for emancipation had brought the influential New York journalist into more or less intimate association with most of the more prominent radical leaders. He had conferred often with Chase on matters of public policy, and idolized the Treasury head regularly in the columns of the *Tribune*. Stanton, Fremont, and Butler, all incurred the good-will of Greeley for their attitude toward emancipation. With the same tenacity that had marked faithful adherence to Fremont while his operations in Missouri were under fire, the *Tribune* indiscriminately defended the activities of General Butler throughout his hectic military career, finally protesting against his dismissal from command and terming his farewell address a "courageous, truthful, dignified and modest" document emanating from "the ablest and the least understood man" that the war had brought forward.[17]

Greeley heartily assented to many minor considerations urged by the radical leaders in Congress, and he became so well identified with them by the summer of 1864, that Lincoln was at a loss to explain the action of the *Tribune* in defending his veto of the Wade-Davis bill, despite a protest from

[16] *Diary of Gideon Welles*, II, 87, 104.
[17] *Daily Tribune*, May 27, 1864; January 14, 1865.

the authors of the measure which was violent and abusive of the President.[18]

Doubtless of greater significance than any other factor in determining the affiliation of Greeley with that element which plotted to "swap horses" in 1864, was his personal relation and attitude toward the President. Like many of his contemporaries, he respected the honesty and sincerity, but had no great confidence in the ability, of Abraham Lincoln. Considering antecedents, Greeley admitted the Illinoisan had discharged his duties at the White House fairly well. Nevertheless, he was neither an individual "of the very highest order of intellect," nor "generally esteemed a man of signal ability" — certainly "not one of those rare great men who mold their age into the similitude of their own high character, massive ability and lofty aims." [19] To be sure, the President had a shrewd, "homely way of putting things" which the people readily understood.[20] In fact, the ability

[18] L. D. Ingersoll, *The Life of Horace Greeley*, 414; *Diary of Gideon Welles*, II, 95.

[19] *Daily Tribune*, February 23, June 24, 1864. While no doubt the *Tribune* expressed such opinions in 1864 partly as radical propaganda, yet the same general attitude is revealed repeatedly (sometimes between the lines) in the columns of the paper throughout the entire war, and indicates that, while perhaps slightly exaggerated, the 1864 expressions were no less genuine. According to Welles, Lincoln's opinion of Greeley in 1864 was not especially complimentary. The Secretary of the Navy wrote in his diary: "Concerning Greeley, to whom the President has clung too long and confidingly, he said to-day that Greeley is an old shoe — good for nothing now, whatever he has been . . . (Said Lincoln) 'Greeley is so rotten that nothing can be done with him. He is not truthful; the stitches all tear out.'" *Diary of Gideon Welles*, II, 112.

[20] *Daily Tribune*, April 29, 1864.

to present lucid, cogent, convincing arguments "in the elucidation of profound truths," so that they would not "evade the dullest apprehension," was truly remarkable, the New York editor confessed; but the Presidency required an individual with extraordinary administrative faculties, capable of speaking and acting effectively through others — a requirement in which homely old Abe was woefully deficient.[21]

As the nation safely emerged from the Civil War crisis with the original pilot at the helm, the *Tribune* still insisted that Abraham Lincoln was "a Man of the People, not in that highest sense which indicates one who unfolds and quickens their better aspirations," but merely in the sense of one who, through a succession of hesitations, vacillations, and errors, had "faithfully reflected the passing phases of public sentiment" in a tempestuous Presidential career. "If Mr. Lincoln had never been born," it concluded, "or had never played a part in public affairs, the recent pages of our National History would have varied considerably in incident and detail from what is actually inscribed there, but the net result would have been nearly the same." [22] And even after the assassin's bullet had consigned the kindly Illinoisan to immortal fame, it still preferred to pay homage for "What He Did Not Say," rather than for outstanding accomplishments.[23]

[21] *Ibid.*, April 19, 1865.
[22] *Ibid.*, March 17, 1865.
[23] *Ibid.*, April 29, 1865.

The impulsive Greeley had never been reconciled to the apparent slowness and lack of vigor with which the President prosecuted the war. Detesting the "easy ways" of Lincoln and the "drifting policy" constantly pursued at Washington, he wanted the contest "driven onward with vehemence" to a swift and decisive conclusion.[24] Discouraged and exasperated by the long drawn out struggle interspersed with repeated failures and reverses for Northern arms, the veteran old journalist convinced himself that of all the tasks which might have fallen to the lot of the none too highly gifted occupant of the White House, with his lack of "celerity of comprehension, decision, action," the most unfortunate was the supervision of a great war.[25] He resolved to render assistance in substituting a more talented character to direct the affairs of the nation, trusting that even though the movement should prove abortive, the hesitant Lincoln, ever in need of pushing and prodding, would be a better President for the opposition encountered.[26]

The attention of Greeley had been turned in the direction of more adequate presidential timber as early as the gloomy fall of 1862. His personal choice was Chase at that time, but in case the Treasury head was not available, "some other good man" —

[24] Horace Greeley, *Recollections of a Busy Life*, 409; *Daily Tribune*, April 29, 1864.

[25] *Daily Tribune*, April 19, 1865.

[26] Letter to Mrs. R. M. Whipple, March 8, 1864, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

perhaps a general — merited consideration.[27] In the spring of 1863, he launched a movement in the direction of General Rosecrans of Ohio — then operating fairly successfully in the West — and, according to Gilmore enlisted the support of such prominent leaders as Stevens, Wade, David Dudley Field, Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, in fact all the more important Republicans with the exception of Conkling, Sumner, and Henry Wilson. Shortly after the disaster at Chancellorsville, he dispatched Gilmore to determine whether or not Rosecrans was "sound on the Goose," that is, sound on the emancipation issue.[28] The mission proved disappointing, however, since the General refused to fall in line with the movement, and his subsequent failure at Chattanooga in the autumn completely removed him from the range of Presidential aspirations.[29]

In the meantime, Chase still lingered in the mind of Greeley as a possibility for the nomination. The aspiring Secretary of the Treasury let it be known in the spring of 1863 that he would not evade any responsibility which the nation saw fit to shoulder

[27] Letter to Mrs. H. C. Ingersoll, November 28, 1862, Ingersoll MSS.

[28] According to Gilmore, Greeley conferred with Chase and Seward also, with regard to Rosecrans, but while both sympathized with the project, they refused to commit themselves. Greeley is alleged to have told Gilmore that if the Union General was sound on emancipation, he would go to Washington personally, force Lincoln to resign, and persuade Hamlin to give Rosecrans charge of the Army.

[29] James R. Gilmore, *Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War*, 100 ff.; *Daily Tribune*, December 5, 1863.

upon him, and, by August, his friends were openly advocating him for the Presidency.[30] Very promptly thereafter, the *Tribune* initiated a campaign to postpone the Republican National Convention, trusting that time would either see the war successfully concluded, or involve such military developments in the spring campaign as would effectively ruin Lincoln's chances for reëlection.[31]

At the same time, Greeley entered into correspondence with Chase, approving the movement launched in his behalf, and expressing preference for his nomination and election, to which the Ohioan graciously reciprocated with fond adulations.[32] And in December, the *Tribune* editor rose before a Wendell Phillips audience to repel a savage attack upon Chase as a presidential aspirant, crediting the Treasury head with "the largest brain and the steadiest arm" that had "given their best efforts to preserve the life of the Nation." [33]

[30] Albert B. Hart, *Salmon Portland Chase*, 309.

[31] *Daily Tribune*, September 26, 1863; letter to B. Brockway, February 28, 1864, Greeley MSS. In this letter, Greeley said: "The Postmasters have nearly cornered us on the Presidency; but there is some time yet, and they are not out of the woods. I shall keep up a quiet and steady opposition, and if we should meantime have bad luck in war, I guess we shall back them out." Of course, no military developments could occur before the following spring, and nothing important or decisive could reasonably be expected before summer. One should not infer from this letter that Greeley hoped for more Northern reverses in order to defeat Lincoln, but he had reason to expect more, and if they were inevitable, he hoped to have them come in time to defeat the one whom he believed to be in a large measure responsible for Union failures.

[32] Letter of Chase to Greeley, October 9, 1863, J. W. Schuckers, *The Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase*, 394.

[33] *Daily Tribune*, December 24, 1863.

Throughout the winter, the *Tribune* issued a steady stream of propaganda in favor of postponing the nomination. Everyone who had a favorite for the Presidency was urged to keep discreetly silent for four or five months,[34] while all earnestly coöperated in crushing the rebellion. There was still hope for finishing up the war before the fourth of July, after which plenty of time would remain for "President making." [35]

The formation of Lincoln clubs in anticipation of the presidential canvass was discouraged by assuring the public that the President had not yet intimated any desire for renomination, whereas a call for more troops demanded the utmost attention from every one until the Army had been replenished.[36] John Quincy Adams in 1828, and Van Buren in 1840, were cited as examples of gratifying first preferences in a nomination, only to meet defeat at the polls. Furthermore, a thirty year precedent had definitely settled it that no second term should be accorded except under "pressure of extraordinary circumstances," thus raising the practical question as to whether or not Chase, Fremont, Butler, or Grant could not "do as well" as Abraham Lincoln.[37]

Meanwhile, the Chase boom had gathered added momentum. The radicals in Congress, led by Wade, Davis, Stevens, and Sumner, formed a committee

[34] *Ibid.*, December 25, 1863.
[35] *Ibid.*, January 14, 1864.
[36] *Ibid.*, February 3, 1864.
[37] *Ibid.*, February 23, 1864.

of like-minded Republicans under the chairmanship of Samuel C. Pomeroy of Kansas, to promote the interests of their hopeful colleague. In February, 1864, the famous Pomeroy Circular, no doubt inspired by the head of the Treasury, appeared to convince the public that four more years should not be trusted to the vacillations and weak-kneed compromises of easy-going old Abe. Although still feigning to stand aloof from all presidential moves, the *Tribune* greeted the Circular warmly, again recounting the splendid achievements of Secretary Chase and insisting that his friends had a perfect right to present the name of one who deserved "respectful and generous considerations." [38] And when Ohio promptly rejected her own supposedly favorite son — Chase withdrawing his hat from the ring as gracefully as possible — it expressed sincere regret at the sudden turn of affairs, trusting that in the future the Ohioan might yet be accorded that honor and responsibility which his ability and unselfish devotion amply justified.[39]

Throughout the entire spring of 1864, Greeley argued for a suspension of the presidential canvass, refusing to express preference for any Union candidate, but adroitly opposing the nomination of Lincoln.[40] Such an attitude was unpopular and greatly reduced subscriptions to his history of the war, the

[38] *Ibid.*, February 24, 1864.
[39] *Ibid.*, March 11, 1864.
[40] *Ibid.*, May 27, 1864.

"American Conflict," Volume One of which was scheduled for distribution on May first.[41] But the *Tribune* persisted, capitalizing "the good old Harry Clay 'One Term' principle," which Lincoln was alleged to have urged in 1840 and even adhered to in his Inaugural.[42] The *Evening Post* and *The Independent* likewise insisted that the Lincoln administration was still on trial, and the opening of a campaign involving a fierce political struggle would be a calamity with the more important military campaign of General Grant, so gloriously begun, still unterminated.[43]

With collapse of the Chase movement, Greeley and the radicals turned to Fremont.[44] The *Tribune* had clung faithfully to the "Pathfinder" through all the vicissitudes of his military career, laboring manfully to repel the various charges of corruption and insubordination heaped upon him,[45] and waging a bitter fight with the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Herald*, and other papers, in a desperate effort to place his name beyond reproach.[46] After he had been removed from command in the West, it devoted an entire extra sheet to the presentation of his "De-

[41] Letter to Mrs. R. M. Whipple, March 14, 1864, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

[42] *Weekly Tribune*, March 12, 1864.

[43] *New York Evening Post*, quoted in *National Intelligencer*, June 3, 1864; *The* (New York) *Independent*, April 7, 1864.

[44] S. D. Brummer, *Political History of New York State During the Period of the Civil War*, Columbia University Studies, XXXIX, 376, 377.

[45] *Daily Tribune*, September 18, 27, 1861.

[46] *Ibid.*, October 9, 1861; February 25, 1862.

fense," vigorously denouncing the "implacable malevolence" with which he had been hounded by the West Point element and the pro-slavery press.[47]

Not content to leave the anti-slavery idol in retirement, Greeley coöperated with William Cullen Bryant, Parke Godwin, and others in signing a memorial requesting that Fremont be assigned to the organization and command of an army of negroes.[48] Although the project never materialized, the General was eventually restored to command, only to withdraw shortly afterwards and enter the inactive list because of an alleged humiliation by the government, there to be petted and idolized by the *Tribune* and the radical cabal as a martyr to the cause of human freedom.[49]

Late in May, 1864, a group of radicals headed by B. Gratz Brown of Missouri, coöperating with sundry abolitionists and reformers in the East, sponsored a mass convention "for consultation and concert of action in respect to the approaching presidential election." About four hundred people gathered at Cleveland and nominated Fremont for the Presidency.[50] The platform inveighed against military arrests and demanded a constitutional amendment prohibiting slavery, a one-term presidency, reconstruction exclusively by Congress, and the confiscation of Confederate lands for the benefit of

[47] *Ibid.*, March 4, 1862.
[48] Alonzo Rothschild, *Lincoln, Master of Men*, 322.
[49] *Daily Tribune*, April 10, June 28, 1862; May 9, 1863.
[50] James F. Rhodes, *History of the United States*, IV, 463, 464.

Union soldiers.[51] Greeley apparently played an active, if not a leading role, in the agitation which led up to the convention, and, according to Weed, corresponded with New England Republicans in behalf of the project.[52]

There was also some talk of General Grant being borne to the White House on a wave of popular acclaim. Early in November, 1863, the *New York Herald* sounded the first note in the agitation. With the Democratic party largely demolished and in the leading strings of the Copperheads, and the Republican party of 1860 merged into "a temporary free and easy Union party," the friends of McClellan in the East and those of Grant in the West should take the initiative, it advised, and organize for an active campaign without reference either to the "dismantled abolition" Republican organization or the disreputable Copperhead Democracy.[53] The next year, the *New York Sun* joined in the movement, anticipating victory for a regenerated Democratic party under the leadership of the hero of Vicksburg and Chattanooga.[54]

On the eve of the National Union Republican Convention at Baltimore, the *Tribune* recognized the nomination of Lincoln as well-nigh inevitable, and it announced half-heartedly, the intention of

[51] *Daily Tribune*, June 1, 1864; *The Platform Textbook*, 66.

[52] *Memoir of Thurlow Weed* (Thurlow Weed Barnes, ed.), II, 495.

[53] See *New York Herald*, November 5, December 23, 1863.

[54] *New York Sun*, June 3, 9, 1864.

acting "with the great body of our fellow Unionists." [55] But, as a matter of fact, the Union ticket received practically no support from the tremendously influential New York journal throughout the entire summer. After the convention had adjourned, the delegates were informed of their folly in not spiking the most serviceable guns of the adversary by nominating some one other than the President; had such a course been pursued, the Union party would have escaped many of the charges hurled at the administration by "unprincipled knaves" of the opposition, and with no more to hope or expect, Lincoln would have been impelled henceforth "by no conceivable motive but a desire to serve and save his country." [56]

Then the *Tribune* lapsed into silence, considering it expedient and proper to devote effort largely "to the invigoration of the War for the Union," and leaving politics and President-making to wait for a more convenient season. The only response to the solicitous enquiries of both friends and enemies concerning the ultimate course contemplated by the journal, was the assurance that it would be precisely opposite to "the ten bitterest and most malignant Pro-Slavery Copperheads" in the country.[57]

By the end of June, Greeley had lost confidence in the Fremont movement, concluding that the prospects of the "Pathfinder" were exceedingly poor for

[55] *Daily Tribune*, June 6, 1864.
[56] *Ibid.*, June 9, 1864.
[57] *Ibid.*, June 20, 1864.

mustering sufficient strength to carry the election.[58] During the latter part of July, he apparently assured the elder Blair, then busily engaged healing dissension and disaffection within Republican ranks, that the best efforts of the *Tribune* would be devoted to secure a reëlection of the President.[59] But the unfortunate peace affair at Niagara, subjecting him to the attacks of the *Evening Post* on one side, the ridicule and torments of the sly Bennett on another, and the critical thrusts of Raymond and the *Times* from still another angle, left the exasperated editor in an ugly frame of mind toward Lincoln, and precluded other than a meagre, almost negligible, support of his cause.[60]

During a lull in the Republican melée, the Peace and War Democrats girded their armor in anticipation of a struggle for control of the Democratic nominating convention scheduled for July 4, but postponed until August 29. Ere the delegates assembled in Chicago, a treasonable plot developed to split the North and end the war in favor of the Confederacy, and it almost reached fruition out on the great plains of the Northwest. The guiding spirits in

[58] *Ibid.*, June 29, 1864.

[59] J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, IX, 248.

[60] E. C. Kirkland, *The Peacemakers of 1864*, 104. The most that the *Tribune* ventured for Lincoln was the following: "We hear of Anti-Slavery men who, from personal and other considerations, think of opposing the reëlection of Mr. Lincoln. We beg them to consider the whole matter very carefully." *Daily Tribune*, July 28, 1864.

the daring enterprise were the tricky ambassadors of Jefferson Davis — more especially in this instance, Jacob Thompson.

According to the testimony of a fellow conspirator in the undertaking, Commissioner Thompson met Vallandigham in Canada by appointment during June, and secured information concerning the numerical strength and effective power of the "Sons of Liberty." Upon the unqualified endorsement of the renegade Ohioan, his associate, James A. Barrett, was supplied with requisite funds for purchasing arms and perfecting organization of the various Copperhead units. In a general way, the plot involved coöperation between a small group of escaped Confederate soldiers residing in Canada and various armed units of the Sons of Liberty in effecting the release of Southern soldiers from prison camps in the Northwest, thereby providing a sufficiently large force to overthrow the state governments of Illinois, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky, and establish a Western confederacy.[61]

Various dates were determined upon during July for the proposed revolution, but each time the Copperhead contingents hesitated and requested a postponement. The movement was finally scheduled for

[61] J. B. Castleman, *Active Service*, 144 ff. Castleman was a Captain in the Confederate Army commissioned by Thompson to coöperate with Captain Thomas H. Hines in conducting the expedition against United States prisons. He claims to have had access to the Official Journal of the Commissioners and other important papers at one time in their possession, in preparing his book, published in 1917.

August 16, the Sons of Liberty again proving irresolute and disposed to argue with the administration at the ballot box before resorting to arms.[62] Still hopeful of success, Thompson dispatched Captains Hines and Castleman with seventy Confederate soldiers to the Democratic Convention at Chicago. The city was filled with an immense crowd of Copperheads, many of whom had been furnished transportation from Confederate funds. The disloyal element was largely unorganized and the leaders still averse to blood-letting, however, so that a project to open Camp Douglas and initiate the revolution, again proved abortive.[63]

Although the convention hall was surrounded by two armed units of Copperheads to guard against any possible interference from Federal authorities, no untoward incident marred the proceedings of the assembled delegates. The Niagara peace affair had played so effectively into the hands of the Confederate commissioners and their allies across the border, that the Peace Democrats exerted great influence in the sessions. They succeeded in securing ratification of a platform calling for the cessation of hostilities and the restoration of peace "on the basis of the federal union," but conservatives dictated the nomination, the choice falling on General McClellan.[64]

[62] *Report of J. Thompson and J. P. Holcombe to J. P. Benjamin*, published by the Union Republican Congressional Committee, 2.

[63] Letter of John B. Castleman to James A. Seddon, Confederate Secretary of War, September 7, 1864, Castleman, 157.

[64] *The Platform Textbook*, 68.

While the Western drama was being enacted, hope of returning Lincoln to the White House all but vanished. With Grant still floundering around Petersburg, apparently as far from entering the gates of Richmond as the day he initiated the bloody campaign in the Wilderness, the opposition argued convincingly that the war had been a failure. And yet the emissaries of Jefferson Davis had been informed there would be no peace until the South consented to the abolition of slavery. How long would the people endure a despotism which unmercifully sapped the blood and treasure of the nation in order to satisfy the fanatical whims of a foul abolitionist minority! With Republican strength divided between Fremont and Lincoln, and the tide of unrest rising higher every day, Peace Democrats reflected exultantly that it would not be long. And there were those within the counsels of the President who were commencing to think the same.

Greeley was desperate. "Nine-tenths of the whole American people, North and South are anxious for peace — peace on almost any terms — and utterly sick of human slaughter and devastation," he wrote Lincoln. "I know that, to the general eye, it now seems that the rebels are anxious to negotiate and that we repulse their advances. I know that if this impression is not removed we shall be beaten out of sight next November." [65] The real apprehension

[65] Letter to Lincoln, August 9, 1864, Nicolay and Hay, IX, 196, 197.

which lurked behind that note of despair is revealed by a letter to a correspondent in England a few days later, asserting: "We are likely to have not a separation but a 'reconstruction,' by which the *whole* Country is to be surrendered to the Slave Power. . . The Rebellion is simply slavery letting go to get a better hold. And it will get that hold. A disunion triumph simply makes slavery the arbiter of our *Whole* country. That is all." "The effort to free our country from Slavery, gallantly made, but unwisely led, is destined to fail," poor Greeley wailed, "and a long black night settles down on our blood stained country." [66]

By the middle of August, some prominent Lincoln leaders concluded that the propaganda of the radicals was more than mere fiction, and their nominee could not be reëlected. Thurlow Weed was so convinced on that count that he bluntly informed the President of the inevitable.[67] "The people are wild for peace," he wrote Seward; and the impression that Lincoln would enter into no peace without the extinction of slavery, spelled certain ruin, he maintained.

Henry Raymond, Chairman of the Republican National Executive Committee, who had attempted with poor success to place a more favorable con-

[66] Letter to Samuel Smith, Liverpool, England, August 16, 1864, Greeley MSS. Italics are Greeley's.

[67] Nicolay and Hay, IX, 250; a letter from Weed to Seward, August 22, 1864, mentions forewarning Lincoln of his defeat ten days before.

struction on the "to Whom it may Concern" letter, decided the election was already all but lost. In desperation, he called a meeting of the National Committee and heard the doleful reports. Illinois and Pennsylvania were gone. Indiana was headed for the breakers. New York was impossible by a fifty thousand majority.[68] When the sad news reached Lincoln, he penned a memorandum pledging coöperation with the choice of the people in saving the country between the election and the inauguration, and went on shouldering the burdens and responsibilities of a thankless nation.[69]

The vigor and disconcerting effectiveness with which the Peace Democrats slashed and railed at Lincoln and his abominable policy, threw the Unionists into confusion. To the minds of many Lincoln supporters, the proceedings at Baltimore had been a great mistake — a mistake which could only be retrieved and the nation saved, by dumping the platform overboard, by persuading Lincoln and Fremont to withdraw from the presidential race, and by uniting on some candidate capable of winning the confidence of the people and pledged to the sole objective of restoring the Union.[70] On August 6, such sentiment found expression in a circular issued in Butler County, Ohio, convening a meeting at Ham-

[68] *Ibid.*, IX, 218, 219.

[69] *Ibid.*, IX, 251.

[70] Letter of J. W. Shaffer to B. F. Butler, August 17, 1864, *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler*, V, 67, 68.

ilton to consider the withdrawal of the rival Republican candidates, and scheduling a convention for Buffalo, New York, September 22, to make a new nomination.[71]

Extremists of the Henry Winter Davis complexion had not been oblivious to the new trend of events. The Wade-Davis bill had just succumbed before a pocket veto, inducing one of the most scathing denunciations of a President ever seen in print,[72] and leaving the authors of the measure in an extremely vindictive mood. Fremont was hopeless with the Lincoln ticket in the field, but the move of the Ohioans suggested an opportunity to shelve the President and remove the sole obstacle to the radical reconstruction program. To Greeley, the project appealed as an opportunity to square accounts for the Niagara episode, ward off defeat in November, and prevent a nasty pro-slavery peace. The *Tribune* took notice of the proposed meeting at Buffalo, and, in order to render the movement successful even though Lincoln and Fremont insisted on remaining in the field, it ingeniously suggested that all Unionists should support the Lincoln electoral ticket, indicating their choice for President with the understanding that the nominee acquiring a plurality at the polls should receive the entire Unionist electoral vote.[73]

[71] (Appleton's) *American Annual Cyclopedia for 1864*, 792.

[72] *Daily Tribune*, August 5, 1864.

[73] *Ibid.*, August 15, 1864. The *Tribune* had advocated this direct method of nominating and electing a President all in one process

A report current that Raymond could not concede the Baltimore nominees an outside chance, supplemented by rumors that even the President had lost all hope of reëlection, stirred the disaffected Lincolnites and radicals to action.[74] On August 19, a number of persons assembled at the residence of George Opdyke, a prosperous merchant of New York and a member of the National Committee, to discuss ways and means of concentrating Republican strength on a candidate commanding "the confidence of the nation." [75] Greeley did not attend the meeting for some reason, but he wrote: "Mr. Lincoln is beaten. He cannot be elected. And we must have another ticket to save us from utter overthrow. If we had such a ticket as could be made by naming Grant, Butler or Sherman for President, and Farragut as Vice, we could make a fight yet." [76]

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in 1852, 1858, and again in 1860, contending that nominating conventions were unnecessary, and less well adapted to concentrating the vote of party adherents upon their "worthiest, strongest man." The *New York Herald* advocated a somewhat similar method for securing the election of Grant in 1864. *Daily Tribune*, July 21, 1852; *Weekly Tribune*, November 20, 1858; *Daily Tribune*, February 24, 1860.

[74] *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler*, V, 68.

[75] Kirkland speaks of a meeting at the home of David Dudley Field on August 14, which Greeley attended. He makes no mention of the meeting on August 19, however, concerning which there is little doubt, so that apparently he is in error concerning the place and date.

[76] If those who sponsored a new convention ever agreed on a candidate considered capable of swinging the election, nothing is known concerning it. There was some talk of General Butler as the man, but apparently his name was not proposed to the group at

The conferees decided upon a call for a new nominating convention to meet at Cincinnati, September 28. For the time being, it was to circulate privately in the quest of signatures. Henry Winter Davis sponsored the movement vigorously and vouched for the support of Wade, suggesting that copies of the summons be sent to Lyman Trumbull and Zachary Chandler. Wade appears to have had little to do with the project despite the assurances of his colleague, while both Sumner and Chase hesitated to render more than a qualified endorsement. But other elements coöperated to more than offset any deficiency on the part of the extremists. Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, representing abolition sentiment in New England, adhered temporarily to the plans, and former Lincoln supporters contributed their part to the undertaking.

Daniel S. Dickinson, a conservative Unionist, who had received considerable support at Baltimore as a running mate of Lincoln, and who was proffered a position of trust under the administration a month later, wrote: "Through all the vicissitudes of the conflict though I could have wished many changes both in *omission* and *commission*, I have maintained a faith in Mr. Lincoln's integrity, and have been willing, and still am, to support him heartily if

Opdyke's, and as a matter of fact, Butler never gave unqualified adherence to the new movement. *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler*, V, 68; *Secret Movement to Supersede Abraham Lincoln in 1864* (transcribed from the *New York Sun* of June 30, 1889), 2, 3.

thereby the end to which my whole soul is pledged can be attained. But *men*, mere men, their wishes, "*claims*," and necessities should not for one single moment stand in the way of Union success, and I cannot believe that Mr. Lincoln, if *fully advised* of the state of the public mind, would desire to enter upon a canvass. . . I am glad, therefore, that you propose a movement which is to look the difficulty in the face and rally and unite again the desponding masses around the old standard of the Union. It is the last resort that is left to hope." [77] It was a motley crew of radicals, conservatives, abolitionists, peace projectors, war enthusiasts —a strange array of qualified friends and bitter foes, that conspired during those critical August days to defeat Abraham Lincoln and save the nation.[78]

But down in Georgia a kindly Providence was shaping events more propitiously for the patient, sorrowful figure in the White House. General Sherman, in charge of operations in the West, moved

[77] Letter, August 26, 1864, *Secret Movement to Supersede Abraham Lincoln in 1864*, 9; *Speeches and Correspondence of Daniel S. Dickinson* (John R. Dickinson, ed.), I, 25, 26; II, 650, 651, 654; italics are Dickinson's.

[78] *Secret Movement to Supersede Abraham Lincoln in 1864*, 2-5, 10-12, 14, 16; J. G. Barrett, *Abraham Lincoln and His Presidency*, II, 294, 295. Immediately after the meeting at Opdyke's, (August 21) there was an attempt on the part of the radicals to persuade Fremont to withdraw from the canvass on condition Lincoln would do the same. Fremont evaded a direct answer to the proposition, but suggested a new "popular convention on a broad and liberal basis," implying a new candidate as well. (Appleton's) *American Annual Cyclopedia of 1864*, 791, 792; *New York Sun*, August 27, 1864.

south from Chattanooga, and by the first part of July, he had pushed the Confederates back within six miles of Atlanta. In the retreat, General Johnston adopted tactics similar to those of Lee, and had he remained in command, doubtless Sherman would have been stalled in front of Atlanta in much the same fashion that Grant was baffled at the gates of Richmond. President Davis and Southern opinion were not so considerate of Johnston, however, and he was replaced by General Hood, far less able and cautious — a General who would fight! Fighting suited the taste of Sherman, who was convinced that superior numbers would overwhelm the Confederates, and three Union victories in rapid succession were the answer to Southern folly and impatience.

Although the North failed to appreciate the full significance of the Georgia campaign and sank back again in despair when the entire month of August was apparently dissipated in enveloping Atlanta — an operation carrying with it unpleasant reminders of the fruitless encircling movement below Petersburg —all was transformed when Hood suddenly withdrew September 3 and allowed Sherman to occupy the Confederate stronghold. The glorious news of the first outstanding victory in almost a year of disheartening failures and disappointments unexpectedly burst upon the North and occasioned great rejoicing and exultation. After all, the war had not been a failure, and Lincoln stock immediately began to rise.

Nothing succeeds like success. The movement for a new convention, which had progressed none too well in spite of the impatient proddings of Henry Winter Davis, was so effectively squelched that the privately circulated call did not appear in public print.[79] Fremont perceived the drift of public sentiment, and professing an unwillingness to jeopardize the interests of the party, withdrew his candidacy with the understanding that Blair, the chief object of radical venom, would be dropped from the Cabinet, thus freeing the Lincoln ticket of all competition in the Union Republican field. Even the big guns of the Peace Democracy were considerably muffled, and the nation prepared to stand by the President until the cohorts of Jefferson Davis had been brought to their knees.

The attitude of the press clearly reveals the drift of public sentiment towards Lincoln after the fall of Atlanta. The *New York Evening Post*, representative of radical opinion, retreated grudgingly from its hostile position in the ranks of the disaffected, and shortly before the election, surrendered to the inevitable, deciding that support of the Union ticket was essential to the successful conclusion of the war and the maintenance of the Union.[80] The *Independent* solemnly appealed "to all staunch friends of the

[79] Letter of George Wilkes to B. F. Butler, September 15, 1864, *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler*, V, 134, 135; *Secret Movement to Supersede Abraham Lincoln in 1864*, 22-26.

[80] *New York Evening Post*, November 3, 4, 5, 1864.

Union cause . . . to heal all past divisions," close the ranks, and "march shoulder to shoulder to the great struggle of November next." [81] The *Sun*, a Democratic organ usually more or less hostile to the administration, likewise capitulated by degrees, indicating but slight enthusiasm for McClellan by the middle of September, and opining on the eve of balloting that the incumbent administrative officers and military leaders were best qualified to end the conflict.[82]

The *Herald*, still one of the most influential dailies in the country with an extensive circulation almost doubled since 1860, promised to be a prominent factor in the campaign for the doubtful state of New York. After the appearance of the Emancipation Proclamation, it had assumed an extremely belligerent attitude toward the administration, ridiculing Lincoln as an "imbecile joker" and cursing all those who had contributed to his seduction.[83] Later, it deplored the split in the Democratic party, denounced the conniving of the Copperheads, and concluded that the election of Grant by a great popular upheaval offered the safest method of salvaging the government from stupid and half-insane leaders and saving the nation.[84] After Atlanta, there were signs of relenting, however, and the tone of the

[81] *The* (New York) *Independent*, September 8, 1864.
[82] *New York Sun*, September 10, November 5, 1864.
[83] *New York Herald*, December 31, 1863.
[84] *Ibid.*, February 3, July 13, 1864.

paper was virtually an endorsement of Lincoln on the eve of the election.[85]

The effect of Atlanta on Greeley was instantaneous. Only two days before, he had addressed a letter to all the Governors of the loyal states requesting their opinion as to whether or not the election of Lincoln was either a probability or a possibility, and enquiring if the interests of the Union party demanded a change of candidates.[86] Then the startling news from Sherman arrived, and the *Tribune* announced: "Henceforth, we fly the banner of Abraham Lincoln for the next Presidency," reflecting that since the slowly advancing old Abe had managed to perform "seven-eighths of the work" of subduing the South, there surely had to be "vigor and virtue enough left in him to do the other fraction." [87]

All the matchless powers of vituperation with which Greeley plagued his enemies were then turned loose upon McClellan. "Vote for a man for President of the United States whose name, as a war cry and slogan of politics, fills the mouths of Rebels on the field of battle!", exclaimed the *Tribune*. "Not a true man in America will do this thing." The only alternative to either "disunion and a quarter of a century of wars, or the Union and political servitude," was the choice of the Lincoln ticket.[88]

[85] *Ibid.*, September 20, October 28, November 2, 5, 1864.
[86] William A. Linn, *Horace Greeley*, 202.
[87] *Daily Tribune*, September 6, 1864.
[88] *Ibid.*, September 6, October 7, 1864.

Henceforth until election day, the gospel of Greeley was set forth with a new ring of optimism and enthusiasm. The slashing attack of gallant Phil Sheridan as he pushed the Confederates southward and cleared the Shenandoah of a dangerous Southern menace, dispelled the last doubt that the Union marched on to final victory, and it branded any insinuation that the conduct of the war had been a failure as "traitorous slander," the loyal masses were assured.[89] Returns from the October elections in Ohio and Indiana forecasting Union triumphs were accepted as good and sufficient evidence of public confidence in the administration, and when Pennsylvania indicated a like intention to repudiate the McClellan candidacy, the *Tribune* prophecied joyously that the presidential ticket was "safe enough" — a prophecy amply fulfilled in November by an overwhelming electoral vote in favor of Abraham Lincoln.[90]

As the country relaxed from the strain and excitement of another political campaign, and Congress prepared to assemble for the winter session, Greeley policy once more accorded in most substantial respects with that of the administration. The *Tribune* concluded that, with the double victory in the field and at the polls, the crisis which faced the Republic had largely vanished — a conviction still further strengthened by the subsequent feud between

[89] *Ibid.*, September 21, 1864.
[90] *Ibid.*, October 12, 13, 14, 19, 1864.

Jefferson Davis and Governor Brown of Georgia over the "mischievous doctrine of secession" and states rights.[91]

The necessity and occasion for pushing the President forward to a more vigorous program had largely disappeared, and the *Tribune* preferred to heal, if possible, past dissension within the ranks of the Union Republican party. It welcomed the appointment of Chase to the post of Chief Justice as a step in that direction, endeavored to smooth over the resignation of Postmaster-General Blair as an evidence of personal, rather than political, hostility doomed to "sink into a speedy oblivion"; and it asserted dogmatically that no trace of division between radicals and conservatives pervaded either the membership of Congress or the counsels of the Cabinet.[92]

In one respect the government failed to keep step altogether with the obstreperous journal, but the disagreement did not elicit from Greeley headquarters the excessively belligerent denunciations of former times. With the Confederacy apparently on the verge of collapsing under the strain of outside pressure and internal dissension, the *Tribune* devoted attention to the peace problem again, motivated no longer by a despairing pessimism, but anxious to hasten the inevitable, and prevent needless sacrifice of blood and treasure. It protested against the atti-

[91] *Ibid.*, November 24, December 17, 1864.
[92] *Ibid.*, November 28, December 9, 1864.

tude of those who recognized war as "a normal condition" and were startled by any suggestion of peace, "as if some wrong were done the Nation." [93]

When Francis Blair, Sr., set out upon his unofficial peace venture to Richmond early in January, the Greeley expositor endorsed the enterprise and anticipated some good therefrom.[94] The *New York Times*, with the partial concurrence of Bennett and the *New York Herald*, denounced the Blair mission, contending that a recognition of Jefferson Davis as an authoritative dispenser of peace was equivalent to a recognition of his right to wage war,[95] and Greeley once more locked horns with "the little villain," Raymond. Before the feud subsided, the more important charges and countercharges relating to the Niagara episode of the preceding summer had been dragged out again before the public gaze, along with the display of other rare bits of combative technique.[96]

As the weeks passed, with the Confederacy apparently tottering but lingering on, with victory tantalizingly near yet still denied, the restless Greeley penned a persistent stream of editorials calling on the President to appeal directly to the Southern people and urge them, through the proffer of special inducements if necessary, to lay down their arms and end the conflict.[97] While no response emanated from

[93] *Ibid.*, January 24, 1865.
[94] *Ibid.*, January 4, 10, 1865.
[95] *Times* quoted in *Daily Tribune*, January 11, March 24, 1865.
[96] *Ibid.*, January 11, 19, 1865.
[97] *Ibid.*, March 20, 22, 27, 1865; *Weekly Tribune*, March 18, 1865.

the White House, even the *Times* and the *World* eventually switched around to the *Tribune* position, indicating with what unanimity public opinion desired that no effort be spared to stop the further effusion of fratricidal blood.[98]

South of the Mason and Dixon line, however, events were marching more swiftly toward their ultimate consummation than impatient editors and a public accustomed to repeated disappointment, realized. General Sherman had driven a wedge straight through the heart of Georgia and rolled back Southern resistance in an irresistible march northward through the Carolinas. Racked by internal dissension, and suffering miserably from the effects of the blockade and an inadequate transportation system, the spirit of the Southern people was broken, and the Confederacy crumbled. The *Tribune* of April 4 carried the headliner: "RICHMOND IS OURS!," and a few days later, the still more inspiring caption: "LEE SURRENDERS AND THE REBELLION IS ENDED."

No one had waited more eagerly for the news than Greeley, and yet, as the North entered into a paroxysm of joy, his mind turned again toward the South. He would have no more bloodshed, no vengeance — not even upon leaders; "as many rebels as possible (should) live and see the South rejuvenated and transformed by the influence of free labor"; [99] the hearty assent of the South to emanci-

[98] *Daily Tribune*, April 6, 1865.

[99] Letter to Mrs. R. M. Whipple, April 13, 1865, *Greeley Letters*, Library of Congress Transcripts.

pation should be won by the display of magnanimity.[100] "We plead against passions certain at this moment to be fierce and intolerant; . . . we plead for a restoration of the Union, against a policy which would afford a momentary gratification at the cost of years of perilous hate and bitterness," *Tribune* constituents read among the din of universal rejoicing — a remarkable plea indeed to proceed from the pen of an abusive, faultfinding radical, who yearned at one time to wreak a terrible vengeance upon the head of every Southern traitor.[101]

Lincoln likewise discussed restoration. There should be no persecution, "no bloody work"; the President would take no part in hangings or killings, even though it involved the worst Confederate leaders. "We must extinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union," his advisers were told. Abraham Lincoln and Horace Greeley were in more complete accord than at any time since the first Inaugural.[102] The *Tribune* waited patiently now, for a

[100] *Daily Tribune*, April 13, 1865.

[101] *Ibid.*, April 11, 1865.

[102] Edward Everett Hale tells of a "brutal, bitter, sarcastic, personal attack on President Lincoln" emanating from the pen of Greeley, which was handed to Sidney Gay, Managing Editor of the *Tribune*, at the moment Lincoln was dying in Washington. Gay is alleged to have read the proof of the article, and ordered the foreman to lock up the type. When the editorial leader failed to appear the next morning, Greeley flew into a great rage, whereupon Gay said: "I know New York, and I hope and believe before God, that there is so much virtue in New York that, if I had let that article go into this morning's paper, there would not be one brick upon another in the 'Tribune' office now." Greeley was silenced and never referred to the subject again. The incident seems extremely

proclamation of amnesty, prepared to throw the weight of its influence on the side of the President in the struggle over reconstruction certain to ensue.

But no proclamation appeared. Instead, a black border encircling the *Tribune* columns of April 15, announced Booth's wicked deed to a stupefied nation. The war had ended. The Union had been preserved. Abraham Lincoln was dead. And a grief stricken people now paid homage to the one who rendered a "full measure of devotion" that the nation might live.

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unlikely in view of the attitude of the *Tribune* toward Lincoln for several months preceding the assassination, and if true, reveals a still stranger quirk of the editor's mind than ever manifested itself up to that time. See Edward E. Hale, *James Russell Lowell and His Friends*, 178, 179.

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Dear Mr. Horner:

I am sorry that I can not help you out in locating the letters indicated. I do not know of any other depository of Greeley letters. The most logical place to expect to find them now would obviously be in the Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress rather recently opened for inspection. However, I assume that you have searched

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Wishing you the best of success in your undertaking, and hoping to see the results of your endeavors on the Niagara episode, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

R. R. Fahrney

171 South Main Avenue
Albany 3, New York

January 26, 1945

Dear Dr. Fahrney

I have been engaged for several years in a study of the relationships of Lincoln and Greeley and have found your "Horace Greeley and the Tribune" very helpful. I want to give a fuller account of the Niagara episode than I have found in print and include all the letters and documents in full. Nicolay and Hay, Vol IX, pp. 195-197, quote from three letters of Greeley to Lincoln dated August 8, 9 and 11, 1864 but do not indicate where the complete letters are to be found. Do you know where they are? I have examined the manuscripts in the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library and the New York State Library and have not found them.

Very sincerely yours

Harlan H. Horner

Dr. Ralph Roy Fahrney
Cedar Falls, Iowa

(over)

Wishing you the best of success in
your undertaking, and hoping to see
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Yours sincerely,

R. P. Fahrney